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Gift H.C. Ryan

THE SERMON BIBLE.

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GENESIS TO II. SAMUEL.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages it is attempted to give the essence of the best homiletic literature of this generation. As the series is to be completed in twelve volumes, proportion has been very carefully studied, and the space allotted to each book corresponds with the number of sermons preached upon it. No pains have been spared to secure accuracy and completeness, and it is confidently hoped that the volumes will form an indispensable part of every preacher's library. Blank pages for additional references are given at the end. Suggestions and corrections will be welcomed by the Editor.

A few references and suggestions to helps available on each book are given for this volume, and will be continued in future issues.

THE PENTATEUCH.

There is no complete collection of expository lectures on the Pentateuch. Dean Stanley's "Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church" are well known; they possess great charm of picturesque narration. Charles Kingsley's "Gospel in the Pentateuch" is a very slight work; it was meant to check destructive conclusions from Colenso's criticism. Dean Law's "Christ is All" is an exceedingly simple evangelical work.

GENESIS.

Two new helps are available. Dr. Marcus Dods' "Expository Lectures on Genesis" in the "Expositor's Bible" have appeared since the greater part of this volume was printed,

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and make perhaps the best book of the kind. Delitzsch's "Commentary on Genesis" (the last edition) is now being translated for the "Foreign Theological Library," and contains much for the preacher as well as for the scholar. The most valuable commentary on Genesis is that of Dillmann, but it is still untranslated. A useful, popular little work is by Dr. Marcus Dods in the "Handbooks for Bible Classes." C. H. M[ackintosh], the Plymouthist, has a suggestive little volume of "Notes on Genesis." Belonging to the past generation, but not superseded, is Andrew Fuller's "Exposition." Under the title "Earth's Morning," Dr. Horatius Bonar has written notes on the first six chapters, and Isaac Williams, a richly suggestive writer, has a book on the "Beginning of Genesis."

EXODUS.

On the book of Exodus there is the popular "Life of Moses," by Dr. James Hamilton, also a little book on Moses by Professor Rawlinson, in the series "Men of the Bible." There is a work on the same subject by Thornley Smith. The Rev. F. G. Rooke has a volume on the "Wanderings of the Children of Israel." On the Ten Commandments the two notable works are those of Dr. R. W. Dale, and Dr. J. Oswald Dykes in the "Household Library of Exposition." There are various popular works on the Tabernacle, including those of White, Brown, and Kitto. Dean Chadwick is announced as the writer on Exodus in the "Expositor's Bible."

LEVITICUS.

A most suggestive book is Jukes' "Law of the Offerings." Dr. Andrew Bonar's "Leviticus" is evangelical. C. H. M. has "Notes on Leviticus."

NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY.

No separate work of importance exists on these books. Dr. W. G. Blaikie is announced to comment on Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy in the "Expositor's Bible."

JOSHUA.

There are good notes on "Joshua and his Successors" by W. H. Groser (Sunday-school Union), and there is also a book on Joshua by Thornley Smith.

JUDGES.

Dr. John Bruce, of Edinburgh, has a "Life of Gideon" and a "Life of Samson," which were warmly eulogised by Hugh Miller. Cassell's "Commentary" in Lange's Series is of exceptional merit. "Men of Faith," by the late L. H. Wiseman, and "Israel's Iron Age," by Dr. Marcus Dods, are also valuable.

RUTH.

Dr. Samuel Cox's little commentary is one of the best. "The Beautiful Gleaner," by W. Braden, may also be mentioned.

I. AND II. SAMUEL.

Dr. Blaikie's lectures are now available in the "Expositor's Bible." Books on David are somewhat numerous. Those of Blaikie, Krummacher, W. M. Taylor, Bosanquet, Charles Vince, may be mentioned. Maclaren's "Life of David as reflected in his Psalms" is a brilliant and picturesque little book.

LIST OF
WORKS, MAGAZINES, ETC., CONSULTED.

Abbott (*E. A.*). "Cambridge Sermons" (1875); "Oxford Sermons" (1879).
Ainger (*A.*). "Sermons Preached in the Temple Church" (1870).
Aitken (*W. Hay*). "The Mission Pulpit;" "Newness of Life" (1878); "Around the Cross."
Alexander (*Bishop*). "Leading Ideas of the Gospels" (1872); "The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity," Bampton Lectures (1876); "The Great Question, and Other Sermons" (1885).
Alexander (*W. Lindsay*). "Sermons" (1878).
Alford (*H.*). "Quebec Chapel Sermons" (1854-57); "Sermons" (1850); "Sermons on Christian Doctrine" (1862); "Meditations in Advent" (1865); "Advent Sermons" (1871).
Allon (*H.*). "The Vision of God" (1876).
"*American Pulpit of the Day*" (1875-6).
Anderson (*W.*). "Discourses," 2nd edition.
"*Anglican Pulpit of To-day.*"
Armstrong (*Bishop*). "Parochial Sermons."
Arnold (*T.*). "Sermons," 6 vols. (1878).
Arnot (*W.*). "The Anchor of the Soul" (1876); "Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life" (1860); "Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth" (1882).

Baines (*J.*). "Sermons" (1875).
Baird (*W.*). "The Hallowing of our Common Life" (1867).
Barry (*Bishop*). "First Words in Australia" (1884); "Sermons in the Chapel of Cheltenham College" (1865).
Bartholomew (*C. C.*). "Sermons chiefly Practical" (1853).
Batchelor (*H.*). "The Incarnation of God."
Beecher (*H. W.*). "Forty-eight Sermons," 2 vols. (1870); "*The Plymouth Pulpit*," Series I.—IV. (1870); "Sermons" (1868-70).
Bellew (*J. C. M.*). "Five Occasional Sermons" (1861).
Bennett (*W. J. E.*). "Distinctive Errors of Romanism."
Benson (*Archbishop*). "Boy-Life: Sundays at Wellington College" (1883); "Three Sermons before the University of Cambridge" (1872); "Singleheart: Sermons" (1877).
Bersier (*E.*). "Sermons" (translated from the French), Series I. (1881) and Series II. (1885).
Bevan (*L. D.*). "Sermons to Students" (1881); "Christ and the Age" (1885).
Binney (*T.*). "King's Weigh-House Chapel Sermons" (1875).

Blaikie (*W. G.*). "Glimpses of the Inner Life of our Lord" (1876).
Blencowe (*E.*). "Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation" (1848).
Blomfield (*A.*). "Sermons in Town and Country" (1871).
A. K. H. B. "Counsel and Comfort from a City Pulpit" (1863); "Sunday Afternoons" (1866); "Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson" (1876); "From a Quiet Place" (1879); "Towards the Sunset" (1883).
Bradby (*E. H.*). "Sermons Preached at Haileybury" (1873).
Bradley (*G. G.*). "Lectures on Ecclesiastes" (1885).
Brooke (*S. A.*). "Sermons in St. James's Chapel," Series I. and II., 2nd edition; "The Fight of Faith," 2nd edition; "The Spirit of the Christian Life," 2nd edition; "Christ in Modern Life," 6th edition; "The Unity of God and Man" (1886).
Brookfield (*W. H.*). "Sermons" (1875).
Brooks (*G.*). "Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons" (1887).
Brooks (*Phillips*). "Sermons" (1878); "The Influence of Jesus" (1879); "The Candle of the Lord" (1881); "Sermons Preached in English Churches" (1883); "Twenty Sermons" (1886).
Brown (*J. Baldwin*). "The Sunday Afternoon: Fifty-two Brief Sermons" (1871); "The Divine Mysteries," 2nd edition; "The Higher Life," 5th edition; "The Divine Life in Man," 2nd edition; "Aids to the Development of the Divine Life" (1862); "The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage" (1861); "Light on the Way: Brief Discourses" (1886).
Browne (*R. L.*). "Sussex Sermons" (1854).
Bruce (*A. B.*). "The Galilean Gospel" ("*Household Library of Exposition*"); "The Parabolic Teaching of Christ" (1882); "The Training of the Twelve" (1877).
Bruce (*J.*). "Sermons."
Budgen (*J.*). "Parochial Sermons" (1860).
Burder (*H. F.*). "Sermons" (1854).
Burgon (*J. W.*). "Ninety-one Short Sermons" (1867); "The Servants of Scripture" (1878).
Burns (*Islay*). "Select Remains."
Burton (*J.*). "Christian Life and Truth."
Bushnell (*H.*). "Christ and His Salvation" (1880); "The New Life" (1861); "Sermons on Living Subjects" (1872).
Butler (*G.*). "Sermons Preached in Cheltenham College Chapel" (1862).
Butler (*H. M.*). "Sermons in the Chapel of Harrow School," Series I. (1861), Series II. (1869).
Butler (*J.*). "Sermons to Working Men" (1850).
Butler (*W. Archer*). "Sermons Doctrinal and Practical," Series I. (1855), Series II. (1856).
Buxton (*H. J. Wilmot*). "Sunday Sermonettes for a Year" (1883); "The Life Worth Living" (1882); "The Children's Bread" (1883); "Waterside-Mission Sermons" (1874-5).

Caird (*J.*). "Sermons" (1858).
Calderwood (*H.*). "The Parables of our Lord" (1880).
Calthrop (*G.*). "Pulpit Recollections" (1865); "Words Spoken to my Friends" (1873).
Campbell (*L.*). "Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal" (1877).

Candlish (*R. S.*). "The Fatherhood of God" (1865); "Discourses on the Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers" (1872); "Sermons" (1873); "The Gospel of Forgiveness" (1879); "Lectures on the Book of Genesis;" "Memorial Sermons;" "The First Epistle of St. John Expounded" (1866); "Life in a Risen Saviour: Discourses on 1 Cor. xv.," 3rd edition; "Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians Expounded in a Series of Discourses" (1875); "Scripture Characters and Miscellanies" (1850); "The Two Great Commandments: Discourses on Rom. xii." (1860).
Carpenter-(Bishop Boyd-). "The Witness of the Heart to Christ" (1878).
Carter (*T. T.*). "Sermons" (1862).
Case (*F.*). "Short Practical Sermons" (1884).
"*Catholic Sermons*," 2 vols. (1874).
Champness (*T.*). "New Coins from Old Gold" (1878); "Little Foxes that Spoil the Vines" (C.S.).
"*Christian Chronicle.*"
"*Christian Commonwealth.*"
"*Christian World Pulpit.*"
Church (*R. W.*). "Sermons before the University of Oxford" (1868); "Influences of Christianity" (1873); "The Gifts of Civilisation" (1880); "Discipline of the Christian Life" (1885); "Advent Sermons" (1886); "Human Life and its Conditions" (1878).
"*Church Sermons by Eminent Clergymen*," 2 vols.
"*Clergyman's Magazine.*"
"*Clerical Library.*"
Clifford (*J.*). "Daily Strength for Daily Living" (1885); "The Dawn of Manhood" (1886).
Colenso (*J. W.*). "Village Sermons" (1853).
Conder (*E. R.*). "Drops and Rocks" (C.S.).
"*Congregationalist.*"
"*Contemporary Pulpit.*"
Cooper (*E.*). "Fifty-two Family Sermons" (1857).
Cotton (*Bishop*). "Sermons to English Congregations in India" (1867); "Expository Sermons on the Epistles for the Sundays of the Christian Year" (1864).
Cox (*S.*). "Expositions" (1885, etc.); "The Pilgrim Psalms" (1874); "An Expositor's Notebook" (1872); "The Quest of the Chief Good: Lectures on Ecclesiastes" (1868); "Expository Essays and Discourses" (1877); "The Bird's Nest" (C.S., 1886); "Balaam: a Study" (1884); "The Book of Ruth" (1876).
Crawford (*T. J.*). "The Preaching of the Cross" (1876).
Culross (*J.*). "Thy First Love" (1878).
Cumming (*J.*). "The Church before the Flood" (1853).
Cunningham (*W.*). "Sermons from 1828 to 1860" (1872).

Dale (*R. W.*). "Lectures on the Ephesians" (1882); "The Evangelical Revival, and Other Sermons" (1880); "The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church," 2nd edition; "Discourses on Special Occasions" (1866).
Davidson (*A. D.*). "Lectures and Sermons" (1872); "Lectures on the Book of Esther" (1859).

Davidson (*J. Thain*). "Talks with Young Men" (1884); "Forewarned—Forearmed" (1885); "The City Youth" (1886).
Davies (*J. L.*). "Epistles of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon" (1866).
Davies (*J. Ogmore*). "Sunrise on the Soul" (1883).
Dawson (*G.*). "The Authentic Gospel" (1883); "Sermons on Daily Life and Duty" (1883).
Dix (*M.*). "Sermons Doctrinal and Practical" (1883).
Dods (*M.*). "The Prayer that Teaches to Pray" (1885); "Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph" ("*Household Library of Exposition*"); "Israel's Iron Age," 4th edition; "The Parables of our Lord;" "The Epistles to the Seven Churches."
Dover (*T. Birkett*). "A Lent Manual" (1884); "The Ministry of Mercy" (1886).
Duncan (*J.*). "The Pulpit and Communion Table" (1874).
Dyke (*J. Van*). "Reality of Religion" (1885).
Dykes (*J. Oswald*). "From Jerusalem to Antioch," 3rd edition; "Sermons" (1882); "The Manifesto of the King" (1881); "The Law of the Ten Words" ("*Household Library of Exposition*"), 1884.

Edersheim (*A.*). "Elisha the Prophet" (1886).
Edmunds (*J.*). "Sixty Sermons" (1864); "Sermons Preached in a Village Church" (1851); "Fifteen Sermons" (1884).
Evans (*R. W.*). "Parochial Sermons" (1854).
Ewing (*Bishop*). "Revelation Considered as Light" (1874).
"*Expositor.*"
Fairbairn (*A. M.*). "The City of God" (1883).
Farrar (*F. W.*). "The Fall of Man, and Other Sermons" (1868); "The Silence and Voices of God" (1874); "In the Days of thy Youth," 2nd edition; "Ephphatha; Sermons" (1880); "The Messages of the Books" (1884); "Sermons and Addresses Delivered in America" (1886).
Finney (*C. G.*). "Sermons on Gospel Themes" (1877).
Fleming (*J.*). "The Gospel in Leviticus."
Forbes (*G. H.*). "The Voice of God in the Psalms" (1866).
Foster (*J.*). "Lectures" (1861).
Fowler (*C. A.*). "Parochial Sermons" (1858).
Fraser (*D.*). "The Speeches of the Holy Apostles" ("*Household Library of Exposition*").
Fraser (*J.*). "Six Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford" (1855).
Furse (*C. W.*) "Sermons at Richmond" (1861); "Helps to Holiness," 2nd edition.

Garbett (*E.*). "Sermons for Children" (1856); "The Soul's Life: its Commencement, Progress, and Maturity" (1853); "Experiences of the Inner Life" (1876).
Garrett (*C.*). "Loving Counsels" (1887).
Gibson (*J. Monro*). "The Ages before Moses" (1879); "The Mosaic Era" (1881).
Gifford (*E. H.*). "The Glory of God in Man" (1865).
Gilfillan (*G.*). "Alpha and Omega" (1860).

Girdlestone (*C.*). "A Course of Sermons," 2 vols. (1834); "Twenty Parochial Sermons" (1832).
Glover (*R.*). "By the Waters of Babylon" (1857).
Glover (*R., of Bristol*). "Lectures on the Lord's Prayer" (1881).
Goebel (*S.*). "Parables of Jesus" (1883).
"*Good Words.*"
Goodwin (*Bishop Harvey*). "Parish Sermons" (1847-62), Five Series; "Oxford and Cambridge Sermons" (1876).
Goulburn (*E. M.*). "Sermons in the Parish Church of Holywell" (1853); "Thoughts on Personal Religion" (1875); "The Pursuit of Holiness" (1885); "Occasional Sermons" (1866); "Acts of the Deacons," 2nd edition; "The Gospel of the Childhood," 2nd edition (1873).
Gould (*S. Baring-*). "One Hundred Sermon Sketches" (1871); "The Birth of Jesus" (1885); "The Preacher's Pocket" (1880); "Nazareth and Capernaum: Ten Lectures" (1886); "Village Preaching for a Year," 3rd edition; "The Passion of Jesus: Discourses" (1885); "The Seven Last Words: a Course of Sermons" (1884); "The Trials of Jesus" (1886).
Greg (*S.*). "A Layman's Legacy" (1877).
Gresley (*Prebendary*). "Practical Sermons" (1868).
Grey (*H.*). "A Parting Memorial" (1858).
Grimley (*H. M.*). "Tremadoc Sermons" (1876).
Guthrie (*T.*). "Speaking to the Heart" (1862); "Studies of Character from the Old Testament" (1867); "Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints" (1859); "The Way to Life" (1862); "The Gospel in Ezekiel" (1863); "The Parables Read in the Light of the Present Day" (1866).

Hall (*E. V.*). "Sermons in Worcester Cathedral."
Hamilton (*J.*). "Works," 5 vols.
Hanna (*W.*). "Last Days of our Lord's Passion" (1864).
Hardy (*E. J.*). "Faint, yet Pursuing."
Hare (*A. W.*). "Sermons to a Country Congregation" (1836).
Hare (*J. C.*). "The Victory of Faith" (1840); "Sermons in Herstmonceux Church" (1841); "The Mission of the Comforter" (1850).
Haslam (*W.*). "The Threefold Gift of God."
Haweis (*H. R.*). "Arrows in the Air" (1878); "Winged Words, or Truth Retold."
Hayman (*H.*). "Sermons in Rugby School Chapel" (1875).
Heber (*R.*). "Parish Sermons," 3rd edition (1885); "Sermons Preached in England," 2nd edition.
Herbert (*T. M.*). "Sketches of Sermons" (1878).
Holland (*H. Scott*). "Logic and Life," 2nd edition; "Creed and Character" (1887); "Good Friday" (1884).
"*Homiletic Quarterly and Magazine.*"
Hood (*E. Paxton*). "Sermons" (1859); "Dark Sayings on a Harp" (1870).
Hook (*W. F.*). "Sermons on Various Subjects" (1841); "Parish Sermons" (1879); "Last Days of our Lord's Ministry" (1832); "Sermons Suggested by the Miracles" (1847-8).
How (*Bishop*). "Plain Words to Children;" "Twenty-four Practical Sermons."

Howatt (*J. R.*). "*The Churchette*" (1886).
Howson (*J. S.*). "The Metaphors of St. Paul."
Hull (*E. L.*). "Sermons," Series I.—III. (1876).
Hunter (*P. H.*). "The Story of Daniel," 2nd edition.
Huntington (*G.*). "Sermons for the Church's Seasons" (1868).
Hutchings (*W. H.*). "Person and Work of the Holy Ghost," 3rd edition; "Some Aspects of the Cross" (1872); "Mystery of the Temptation" (1875).
Hutchison (*J.*). "Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians" (1884); "Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians" (1887); "Our Lord's Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia" (1881).

Illingworth (*J. R.*). "Sermons in a College Chapel" (1881).
Irving (*E.*). "Collected Writings," 5 vols. (1864-5).

Jackson (*Bishop*). "Sermons at St. Paul's."
Jelf (*G. E.*). "Make Up for Lost Time: a Course of Sermons" (1871); "Our Treasure of Light" (1874).
Jellett (*J. H.*). "The Elder Son."
Jenkins (*D. R.*). "The Eternal Life, and Other Sermons" (1885).
Jessopp (*A.*). "Norwich School Sermons" (1864).
Jones (*J. C.*). "Studies in St. Matthew" (1881); "Studies in the Acts."

Keble (*J.*). "Sermons for the Christian Year;" "Sermons Occasional and Parochial" (1867); "Sermons Academical and Occasional" (1848).
Ker (*J.*). "Sermons," 12th edition; "Sermons," 2nd series (1887).
King (*Bishop*). "Meditations on the Last Seven Words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1876).
King (*D.*). "Memoir and Sermons" (1880).
Kingsley (*C.*). "Sermons on National Subjects," 2nd series (1852, 1854); "Sermons for the Times" (1855); "The Good News of God" (1859); "Gospel of the Pentateuch" (1863); "The Water of Life" (1867); "Discipline, and Other Sermons" (1868); "Village Sermons;" "Town and Country Sermons" (1877); "Westminster Sermons" (1878); "All Saints' Day, and Other Sermons" (1878); "From Death to Life" (1887).
Krummacher (*F. W.*). "David the King of Israel," 2nd edition.

Laidlaw (*J.*). "Bible Doctrine of Man" (1878).
Lang (*J. Marshall*). "The Last Supper of our Lord" ("*Household Library of Exposition*").
Leathes (*S.*). "Studies in Genesis" (1880); "Bampton Lectures" (1874); "The Foundations of Morality: Discourses on the Ten Commandments" (1882); "Truth and Life: Short Sermons" (1872).
Leckie (*J.*). "Sermons Preached at Ibrox" (1884).
Lee (*R.*). "Sermons" (1879).
Liddon (*H. P.*). "University Sermons," 1st series (8th edition), 2nd series (1879); "Thoughts on Present Church Troubles" (1882).

"Forty Sermons from the *Penny Pulpit*," 4 series (1886); "Easter Sermons" (1885).
Lindesie (*A.*). "The Gospel of Grace" (1884).
"'*Literary Churchman*' Sermons."
Litting (*G.*). "Thirty Sermons for Children."
Little (*J. Knox-*). "Manchester Sermons," 2nd edition; "Characteristics of the Christian Life," 3rd edition; "Mystery of the Passion" (1881).
Lorimer (*R.*). "Bible Studies in Life and Truth" (1883).
Lynch (*T. T.*). "Three Months' Ministry" (1861); "Sermons for my Curates" (1871).

McCheyne (*R. M.*). "Additional Remains."
McCulloch (*J. M.*). "Sermons on Unusual Subjects" (1884).
Macdonald (*G.*). "Unspoken Sermons" (1886); "The Miracles of our Lord," 2nd edition (1886).
Macduff (*J. R.*). "Communion Memories" (1885); "Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains" (1861); "The Prophet of Fire, or the Life and Times of Elijah" (1864); "Noontide at Sychar" (1869); "Memories of Olivet" (1868); "Memories of Patmos" (1871); "Parables of the Lake" (1885).
Mackellar (*R.*). "Ministry on the Clyde" (1876).
Mackenal (*A.*). "Life of Christian Consecration" (1877); "Christ's Healing Touch," 2nd edition.
Maclaren (*A.*). "Week-day Evening Addresses" (1877); "Sermons Preached in Manchester," Series I.-III. (1875), also "Sermons Preached in Union Chapel, Manchester" (1865); "A Year's Ministry," 1st and 2nd series (1884); "The Secret of Power" (1882); "Christ in the Heart" (1886); "Life of David as reflected in his Psalms" (1880).
Macleod (*A.*). "Days of Heaven upon Earth" (1878); "Talking to the Children" (1873); "The Gentle Heart" (1881).
Macmillan (*H.*). "Our Lord's Three Raisings from the Dead" (1876); "Two Worlds are Ours" (1880); "Bible Teachings in Nature" (1871); "The Olive Leaf" (1886); "The True Vine" (1871).
Magee (*Bishop*). "Sermons at St. Saviour's, Bath;" "Sermons at the Octagon Chapel, Bath" (1858); "Christ and the Age" (1884).
Mansel (*H. L.*). "Bampton Lectures" (1859).
Martin (*S.*). "*Westminster Chapel Pulpit*" (1860-65); "Rain upon the Mown Grass," 2nd edition; "Comfort in Trouble" (1878).
Martineau (*J.*). "Endeavours after the Christian Life" (1876); "Hours of Thought" (1876).
Mason (*E.*). "A Pastor's Legacy" (1853).
Matheson (*G.*). "Moments on the Mount" (1884).
Maurice (*F. D.*). "Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament" (1855); "Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament" (1871); "Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures" (1854); "Sermons in Country Churches" (1873); "The Commandments an Instrument of National Reformation" (1866); "The Old Testament: Nineteen Sermons" (1851); "Sermons on the Sabbath Day" (1853); "Gospel of St. John" (1857); "Lectures on the Apocalypse" (1885); "The Lord's Prayer" (1848); "The

Epistles of St. John" (1857); "The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven: Lectures on St. Luke" (1864); "Sermons," 6 vols. (1857-59); "Christmas Day, and Other Sermons" (1843).
Meller (*W.*). "Village Homilies" (1878).
Mellor (*E.*). "The Hem of Christ's Garment" (1882); "In the Footsteps of Heroes" (1885).
Melvill (*H.*). "Sermons on Less Prominent Facts in Sacred Story" (1872); "Lothbury Lectures" (1876); "Sermons from the *Penny Pulpit*;" "Four Sermons at Cambridge" (1837); "Voices of the Year" (1856); "Sermons" (1834).
Milligan (*W.*). "The Resurrection of our Lord" (1884).
"*Miscellaneous Sermons by Clergymen of the Church of England*" (1860).
Moberly (*G.*). "Parochial Sermons" (1886); "Plain Sermons at Brighstone" (1882); "Sermons at Winchester College" (1848).
"*Modern Pulpit*."
Momerie (*A. W.*). "The Origin of Evil," 2nd edition; "Preaching and Hearing" (1886); "Defects of Modern Christianity" (1882); "Agnosticism, and Other Sermons" (1884).
Moorhouse (*J.*). "Some Modern Difficulties: Four Sermons" (1861); "The Expectation of the Christ."
Morrison (*G.*). "The House of God."
Mozley (*J. B.*). "University Sermons," 3rd edition; "Parochial and Occasional Sermons," 2nd edition; "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages."
Munger (*T. T.*). "The Freedom of Faith" (1883); "The Appeal to Life" (1887); "Lamps and Paths" (1885).
Murphy (*J. G.*). "The Book of Daniel" (1884).
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GENESIS.

Chap. I., ver. 1.—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

I. WHAT is meant by creation? The giving being to that which before was not. The expression, "the heavens and the earth," is the most exhaustive phrase the Hebrews could employ to name the universe, which is regarded as a twofold whole, consisting of unequal parts. Writing for men, Moses writes as a man. The moral importance of the earth, as the scene of man's probation, is the reason for the form which the phrase assumes. The truth of the creation governs the theology of the Old and New Testaments, and may have influenced the formation of heathen cosmogonies, such as the Etruscan and the Zendavesta. Creation is a mystery, satisfactory to the reason, but strictly beyond it. We can modify existing matter, but we cannot create one particle of it. That God summoned it into being is a truth which we believe on God's authority, but which we can never verify.

II. Belief in the creation of the universe out of nothing is the only account of its origin which is compatible with belief in a personal and moral God.

Creation suggests Providence, and Providence leads the way to Redemption. If love or goodness were the true motive in creation, it implies God's continuous interest in created life. By His love, which led Him to move out of Himself in creation at the first, He travels with the slow, onward movement of the world and of humanity, and His Incarnation in time, when demanded by the needs of the creatures of His hand, is in a line with that first of mysteries, His deigning to create at all. Belief in creation keeps man in his right place of humble dependence and thankful service. A moral God will not despise the work of His own hands, and Creation leads up to Redemption.

H. P. LIDDON, *University Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 38.

THE Bible spoke in the language and through the knowledge of its time. It was content to reveal spiritual truth, but left men to find out scientific truth for themselves. It is inspired

with regard to principles, but not as regards details of fact. The principles laid down in this chapter are: (1) the unity of God; (2) that all noble work is gradual; (3) the interdependence of rest and work; (4) that man was made in the image of God.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, p. 222.

I. MAN naturally asks for some account of the world in which he lives. The answer of the text as to the creation of the heavens and the earth is: (1) simple; (2) sublime; (3) sufficient.

If God created all things, then (*a*) all things are under His government; (*b*) the heavens and the earth may be studied religiously; (*c*) it is reasonable that He should take an interest in the things which He created.

II. Biblical theology teaches: (1) that creation is an expression of God's mind; (2) that creation may form the basis for the consideration of God's personality and character; (3) that God's word is its own security for fulfilment; (4) that the word which accounts for the existence of nature accounts also for the existence of man.

PARKER, *People's Bible*, vol. i., p. 118.*

THE whole Trinity, each in His separate office, though all in unity, addressed themselves to the work of creation: (1) the Holy Spirit brooded over the watery chaos; (2) the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was that *power*, or "Arm of the Lord," by which the whole work was executed,—"In the beginning was the Word;" (3) the Father's mind willed all, planned all, and did all. God created *only* "the heaven and the earth." He provided a heaven, but He did not provide a hell. That was provided, not for our world at all, but for the devil and his angels. If we ask why God created this universe of ours, three purposes suggest themselves: (1) it was the expression and out-going of His wisdom, power, and love; (2) it was for the sake of His noblest work, His creature, man; (3) the heaven and the earth were meant to be the scene of the exhibition of His own dear Son. Remember, that marvellously grand as it was, that first creation was only a type and earnest of a better.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 37.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—H. P. Liddon, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 205 (see *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 1); J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 320; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 1;

* Further references to Parker are to the *People's Bible*, except where another work is named.

A. P. Peabody, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 333; J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, p. 79; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 87, vol. iv., p. 420; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xx., p. 19, vol. xxii., p. 82; S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 1; J. E. Gibberd, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 249; M. G. Pearse, *Some Aspects of the Blessed Life*, p. 25; C. Kingsley, *Discipline and other Sermons*, p. 112; C. Kingsley, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 1; R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis, Discourses*, vol. i., p. 18; B. Waugh, *The Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 59. i. 1-3.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 1. i. 1-5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 660.

Chap. i., ver. 2.—"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

We should be sure we understand both Nature and Scripture before we pronounce certainly on their agreement or disagreement, and it can hardly be said that either is quite understood. To attempt to reconcile all the expressions in this chapter with the details of science is a mistake. It has certain true things to declare, facts of nature which have a religious bearing, and are a needed introduction to the revelation which follows; and these facts it presents in the poetic form natural to the East, and most suited to impress all kinds of readers. The "six days" are fit stages in a poetical account of the great evolution, even as a play acted in a few hours represents the events of years. Three great lessons are impressed in this chapter: (1) that God is the Maker of heaven and earth; (2) that by means of His operation on dead and formless matter the order and beauty of the varied and living world were produced; (3) that the change was gradual. The Spirit of God brought order and development to the material world. We cannot see the Intelligence, the Mind which directs the works of nature; but it is equally true that we cannot see them in the works of man. It is truer to say that the Invisible Mind, the unseen Spirit of God, moved upon the formless earth and brought it to its present ordered form, than to say it happened so. The Spirit of God *moved*, *i.e.*, brooded as a bird over her young. This indicates the quiet, untiring ways in which God works in the heavens and the earth. The Spirit of God must bring order and development (1) to the spiritual world, (2) to the individual soul. The Spirit of God must move or brood upon the worse than darkness of sinful and godless hearts.

T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 1.

References: i. 1. 2.—R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 88: *Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 2nd Series, vol. ii., p. 593; R. W. Evans, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 237; Bishop H. Browne, *Ola*

Testament Outlines, p. 2; A. P. Stanley, *Good Words* (1875), p. 273; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 63. i. 3.—A. P. Stanley, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 171 (see also *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 3); B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 61. i. 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1252; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 5; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, pp. 5, 192; Parker, *Pulpit Notes*, p. 148; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 113.

Chap. i., ver. 5.—"God called the light day, and the darkness He called night." John iv. 4.—"The night cometh."

(1) One of the first lessons which God intends us to learn from the night is a larger respect for wholesome renovation. Perhaps this may not show itself in any great lengthening of our bodily life, but rather in a more healthy spirit, less exposed to that prevailing unrest which fills the air and which troubles so many minds. (2) The night is the season of wonder. A new and strangely equipped population, another race of beings, another sequence of events, comes into and fills the world of the mind. Men who have left their seal upon the world, and largely helped in the formation of its deepest history,—men whose names stand up through the dim darkness of the past, great leaders and masters, have admitted that they learned much from the night. (3) The next thought belonging to the night is that then another world comes out and, as it were, begins its day. There is a rank of creatures which moves out into activity as soon as the sun has set. This thought should teach us something of tolerance; senses, dispositions, and characters are very manifold and various among ourselves. Each should try to live up to the light he has, and allow a brother to do the same. (4) Such extreme contrasts as are involved in light and darkness may tell us that we have as yet no true measure of what life is, and it must be left to some other conditions of existence for us to realize in anything like fulness the stores, the processes, the ways of the Kingdom of the Lord which are provided for such as keep His law. (5) Let us learn that, whether men wake or sleep, the universe is in a state of progress, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." (6) Let us learn to use day rightly and righteously, to accept the grace and the forces of the Lord while it is called to-day, and then the night shall have no forbidding, no repulsive significance.

H. Jones, *The Family Churchman*, Oct. 20th, 1886.

References: i. 5.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 153; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 193. i. 5, 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 38 i. 11.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 65.

Chap. i., ver. 14.—"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

THERE are few words much oftener in our mouths than that short but most important word, "Time." It is the long measure of our labour, expectation, and pain; it is the scanty measure of our rest and joy. And yet, with all this frequent mention of it, there are, perhaps, few things about which men really think less, few things upon which they have less real settled thought.

I. Two remarkable characteristics make up the best account which we can give of time. The one, how completely, except in its issue, it passes from us; the other, how entirely, in that issue, it ever abides with us. We are the sum of all past time. It was the measure of our opportunities, of our growth. Our past sins are still with us as losses in the sum of our lives. Our past acts of self-denial, our struggles with temptation, our prayers, our times of more earnest communion with God,—these are with us still in the blessed work which the Holy Spirit has wrought within us.

II. Such thoughts should awaken in us: (1) deep humiliation for the past; (2) thankfulness for the past mercies of God; (3) calm trust and increased earnestness for the future.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 73.

REFERENCES: i. 14.—H. Macmillan, *Two Worlds are Ours*, p. 18. i. 14, 15.—A. P. Stanley, *Good Words*, 1871, p. 453. i. 14-19.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 39.

Chap. i., ver. 16.—"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also."

IT is noticeable that while this chapter does not profess to be a scientific account of creation, not only is creation represented as a gradual process, but the simpler living forms are introduced first, and the more advanced afterwards, as the fossil remains of plants and animals prove to have been the case. God has seen fit to appoint, in the world of mind as well as of matter, great lights, and lesser lights, and least lights, answering to the daylight, moonlight, and starlight of the heavens.

I. Consider the lights of angels, of men, and of animals. The angels behold the face of God and watch His plans from age to age. Compared with us, they live in the blaze of day: we have the lesser light of human reason, which relieves, but does not banish, the night. There are around us other conscious

creatures, endowed with still feebler powers, who grope in the dim starlight of animal existence. God is the "Father of all lights."

II. The lights of Heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity. What a glimmering starlight of religious knowledge is that of the heathen millions! How partial and imperfect was the knowledge that even the Jews possessed! At last "the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in His wings." The world has not exhausted, it has scarcely touched, the wealth of spiritual light and life in Him.

III. The lights of childhood, manhood, and the heavenly state. The faint gleam of light in childhood develops into the stronger light of manhood, but even that does not banish the night. "In Thy light we shall see light.

T. M. HERBERT, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 16.

REFERENCES: i. 21.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 191. i. 24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 40. i. 24-26.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 371.

Chap i., ver. 26.—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

IT is not too much to say that redemption, with all its graces and all its glories, finds its explanation and its reason in creation. He who thought it worth while to create, foreseeing consequences, can be believed, if He says so, to have thought it worth while to rescue and to renew. Nay, there is in this redemption a sort of antecedent fitness, inasmuch as it exculpates the act of creation from the charge of short-sightedness or of mistake. "Let us make man in our image," created anew in Jesus Christ, "after the image of Him that created him."

Notice three respects in which the Divine image has been traced in the human.

I. "God is Spirit," was our Lord's saying to the Samaritan. Man is spirit also. This it is which makes him capable of intercourse and communion with God Himself. This it is which makes prayer possible, and thanksgiving possible, and worship possible in more than a form and name. Spirituality thus becomes the very differentia of humanity. The man who declares that the spiritual is not, or is not for him, may well fancy himself developed out of lower organisms by a process which leaves him still generically one of them; for he has parted altogether from the great strength and life of his race.

II. Spirituality is the first Divine likeness. We will make sympathy the second. Fellow-suffering is not necessarily sym

pathy. On the other hand, sympathy may be where fellow-suffering is not. Love is sympathy, and God is love. Sympathy is an attribute of Deity. When God made man in His own likeness, He made him thereby capable of sympathy. Spirituality without sympathy might conceivably be a cold and spiritless grace; it might lift us above earth, but it would not brighten earth itself.

III. The third feature is that which we call influence, the other two are conditions of it. Influence is by name and essence the gentle flowing in of one nature and one personality into another, which touches the spring of will and makes the volition of one the volition of the other. It is indeed a worse than heathenish negation of the power and activity of God, the source of all, if we debar Him alone from the exercise of that spiritual influence upon the understanding, the conscience, and the heart of mankind, which we find to be all but resistless in the hands of those who possess it by His leave. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 369.

REFERENCES: i. 26.—Parker, vol. i., p. 164; C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 18; Bishop Woodford, *Sermons Preached in Various Churches*, p. 33; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1491; E. M. Goulburn, *Pursuit of Holiness*, p. 102; J. Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 98; Smith, *Donellan Lecture* (1884-85), p. 173; H. Grey, *A Parting Memorial*, p. 286; A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 137; S. T. Williams, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 218. i. 26-31.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 9. i. 26, 27.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 214.

Chap. i., ver. 27.—"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

MAN is one, yet threefold: he has mind, body, and soul, a mind ruling the body, a body executing the decrees of the mind, a soul giving life to and energising the body. On the mind alone there is a triple stamp of the Creator; in the mind of man are Intelligence, Will, and Memory. *Intelligence*, whereby he can understand about God; *Will*, whereby he may seek Him; *Memory*, whereby he may recall the blessings God has showered upon him. Before these three powers can obtain their perfect satisfaction in God, the three wounds of man must be healed. By his fall from God the Father, who is Omnipotence, man has contracted infirmity; by withdrawing from God the Son, who is the Wisdom of God, he has contracted ignorance; by withdrawing from the Spirit, who is the Goodness of God, he has contracted love of evil. These three wounds will be healed by *Faith*, which will illumine man's ignorance; by *Hope*, which will

sustain his infirmity; and by *Charity* or *Love*, which will counteract his evil concupiscence.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 9.

I. GOD'S image in man consisted: (1) in the possession of moral powers and susceptibilities; (2) in the pure and righteous state of his whole nature; (3) in his relative position toward other terrestrial creatures.

II. The blessedness involved in the possession of God's image consisted in making human nature: (1) a mirror of God in itself; (2) a mirror of God to other creatures; (3) a mirror in which God saw Himself.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 1878, p. 210.

REFERENCES: i. 27.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), pp. 133, 207, 278, 427; Bishop W. Basil Jones, *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 4; T. G. Bonney, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, May 10th, 1887; *Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 205; J. W. Burgon, *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal*, June 12th, 1884; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, vol. v., p. 1; Bishop Alexander, *Norwich Cathedral Discourses*, 4th series, No. 1; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 35; F. Temple, *Bampton Lecture* (1884), pp. 37, 69; S. A. Brooke, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 17. i. 27, 28.—F. A. Tholuck, *Hours of Christian Devotion*, p. 370.

Chap. i., ver. 28.—"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

DOES this command mean for the human race a destiny of progress or poverty? This question is being pressed upon us to-day from many directions. It is asked, not only by theologians and economists, but as a vital question of daily bread by English labourers and workmen. In the power to bring social questions within the range of a common religious teaching is to be found, in these days, the true "note" of a standing or falling Church. If Christianity still holds the key to all the unsolved problems, both of society and of the individual, it is for the Church of the present to grasp, if she can, and set forth, whether by word or deed, the bearing which Christianity has upon the social life of man.

I. Is poverty a perpetual ordinance of God, to be accepted as an essential part of the providential scheme of government? To any one who believes in the daily prayer Christ taught us, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," there can be no doubt as to the true answer to that question. We believe in the perfectibility of humanity. The

grand sweep of things is from the lower to the higher. So far from attributing the state of poverty to the providential order of society, it is to that social order that we attribute all victories which have been won over poverty. Study the laws of Providence, strive to co-operate with them, and you shall see accomplished in humanity this double manifestation of progress,—all men approximating to a common level, and a level which is continually rising.

II. How shall we explain Christ's apparent exaltation of poverty and depreciation of just those social elements which seem most characteristic of modern civilisation?

Jesus Christ did not come into the world to give men a new system of morality, but to give us a new motive to be good and to do right. His denunciation of riches and exaltation of poverty must not be separated from the conditions under which He spoke, much less from the real object which He had in view. His method always was to put the abstract principle into concrete shape. We must not go to the New Testament as to a code of maxims and dicta; we must imbue ourselves with the mind of Christ, and let our behaviour flow freely from it.

III. Let us not rest satisfied with the message of the man of science, of the sociologist who tells us that our only hope is in the slow progress of social evolution; let us go down into the thick of the fight, into the grimy street and monotonous village, and there, amid the "dim common populations," let us do journeyman service.

C. W. STUBBS, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, March 1st, 1883.

Chap. i., ver. 31.—**"And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."**

No one can prove to us that God made the world; but faith, which is stronger than all arguments, makes us certain of it.

I. All which God has made is good, as He is, and, therefore, if anything in the world seems to be bad, one of two things must be true of it: (1) either it is *not* bad, though it seems so to us, and God will bring good out of it in His own good time; or (2) if the thing is really bad, then God did not make it. It must be a disease, a mistake, a failure of man's making, or of some person's making, but not of God's making. For all that He has made He sees eternally, and, behold, it is very good.

II. God created each of us good in His own mind, else He would not have created us at all. Why does God's thought of

us, God's purpose about us, seem to have failed? We do not know, and we need not know. Whatever sin we inherited from Adam, God looks on us now, not as we are in Adam, but as we are in Christ. God looks not on the old corrupt nature which we inherited from Adam, but on the new and good grace which God has meant for us from all eternity, which Christ has given us now.

III. That which is good in us God has made; He will take care of what He has made, for He loves it. All which is bad in us God has not made, and therefore He will destroy it; for He hates all that He has not made, and will not suffer it in His world. Before all worlds, from eternity itself, God said, "Let us make man in our likeness," and nothing can hinder God's word but the man himself. If a man loves his fallen nature better than the noble, just, loving grace of God, and gives himself willingly up to the likeness of the beasts that perish, then only can God's purpose towards him become of none effect.

C. KINGSLEY, *The Good News of God*, p. 268.

REFERENCES: i. 31.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 238, vol. vi., p. 1; F. W. Farrar, *Ephphatha, Sermons*, p. 157; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 1; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 19; Archbishop Thomson, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, pp. 138, 155; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 42.

Genesis i.

IT is possible that God made at first only one kind of matter, the germ of all the universe. Indeed, Scripture seems to hint this in the sublime record of the origin of light: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Here light is evidently regarded as the first of all sublunary things.

The principal agent in this work was the Son of God. He had made the third heaven. He had created angels. The strong Satan himself was originally the workmanship of Christ. It is no strange hand that moulded the worlds. Go wherever you may, the hand of Christ has been before you, and He Who made all these strange suns, and all these mighty systems, is the very Victim that suffered, bled, and died on Calvary.

I. The creation was a gradual process, a process probably extending over millions of ages; not merely a process, but a procession of things and beings, from inferior to superior, from the less to the more perfect. The reasons might be: (1) to show that God's works were not the offspring of hasty impulse, but that they were planned from everlasting, and executed

with minute and lingering care; (2) to discover the variety of methods which a God infinitely rich in resources can employ in effecting His great purposes. This gradual creative work occupied the Creator for millions of ages. This we gather, not from the Bible, but from the discoveries of geology.

II. The creative process at last came to a point in man, who, amidst ten thousand other animated forms, alone was made, in the full sense of that word, perfect, and who became the best and highest work of God. From the Scripture statements about the creation of man we deduce the following principles: (1) that man was formed by a direct act of Omnipotence; (2) that he was made after the model of his Maker, and therefore perfect; (3) that he was immeasurably superior to the lower animals, and entitled to dominion over them; (4) that he was the object of God's peculiar blessing; (5) that one main purpose of his creation was to subdue and cultivate the earth; (6) that he consisted of two parts—a body taken out of the dust of the ground, and an immaterial part breathed into him by his Creator; (7) that although created a unit, he was potentially plural, too, and was destined to be joined by a companion in his original state of innocence and purity; (8) and that he was in a state of probation, and exposed to temptation and the hazard of fall.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 49.

REFERENCES TO GEN. I.—H. Alford, *Meditations in Advent*, p 71; S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, pp. 5, 17; *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 191, vol. vii., p. 444; 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 354; Parker, vol. i., pp. 103, 111. i.—ii. 4.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 34; J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 55.

Chap. ii., ver. 1.—"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them."

THE heavens and the earth were finished when God created man in His own image. Then the universe was what He designed it to be; then He could look, not upon a portion of it, but upon the whole of it, and say, "It is very good."

I. We are told: (1) "God made man in His own image; male and female created He them;" and (2) "He made man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The two accounts are distinct. If we had the first only,

we should have the description of an ideal man, without being told that there was an actual man. The Creation in the highest sense must mean the bestowing, under whatever limitations, of a portion of God's own life, that which corresponded with His own being. It must denote, not what we understand by putting together a material thing, but the communication of that inward power and substance without which matter is but a dream.

II. When we hear of the earth bringing forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the fishes or beasts being fruitful and multiplying, we are told of living powers which were imparted once, but which are in continual exercise and manifestation; the creative word has been uttered once, it is never for a moment suspended; never ceases to fulfil its own proclamation. Creation involves production. (1) Creation is not measured by the sun. The week was especially meant to remind the Jew of his *own* work and *God's work;* of God's rest and his own rest. (2) It was to bring before him the fact of his relation to God, to teach him to regard the universe not chiefly as under the government of sun or moon, or as regulated by their courses, but as an order which an unseen God had created, which included sun, moon, stars, earth, and all the living creatures that inhabit them.

III. From the first chapter of Genesis we are taught more clearly than any words can teach us what man becomes when he is a centre to himself, and supposes that all things are revolving around him. But, most of all, these chapters prepare us for the announcement of that truth which all the subsequent history is to unfold, that the Word who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, who placed the sun, and moon, and stars in their orbits and called all organised creatures into life; and who is, in the highest sense, the Light of men—the Source of their reason, the Guide of their wills—is the Head of all principalities and powers, the upholder of the whole universe.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 33.

REFERENCES: ii. 1.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 131; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 79. ii. 1-3.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 1st series, p. 366; Parker, vol. i., p. 127; A. Pott, *Sermons for the Festivals and Fasts*, p. 1. ii. 2.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 369; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 176; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p 76. ii. 2, 3.—E. Irving, *Collected Writings*, vol. iv., p. 515; G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 61.

Chap. ii., ver. 3.—"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

I. WHETHER the patriarchs were or were not commanded to keep the Sabbath is a thing which we can never know; it is no safe foundation for our thinking ourselves bound to keep it, that the patriarchs kept it before the Law was given, and that the commandment had existed before the time of Moses, and was only confirmed by him and repeated. For if the Law itself be done away in Christ, much more the things before the Law. The Sabbath may have been necessary to the patriarchs, for we know that it was needed even at a later time; they who had the light of the Law could not do without it. But it would by no means follow that it was needed now, when, having put away the helps of our childhood, we ought to be grown up into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. So that the words of the text neither prove us right in keeping the Sunday, nor would they prove us wrong if we were to give up the observance of it.

II. The real question, however, is, Are we right in keeping the Sunday, or are we not right? We are bound by the spirit of the fourth commandment to keep holy the Sunday because we are not fit to do without it. As the change of the day from the seventh to the first shows us what God designed for us, shows us the heavenly liberty to which we were called, so the long and unvaried practice of the Church in keeping the first day holy shows us their sad feeling and confession that they were not fit for that liberty; that the Law, which God would fain have loosed from off them, was still needed to be their schoolmaster. The bond of the commandment broken through Christ's spirit was through our unworthiness closed again. We still need the Law, we need its aid to our weakness; we may not refuse to listen to the wisdom of its voice because the terror of its threatenings is taken away from the true believer.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 184.

AN allegory lies in this history. Every week has its Sabbath, and every Sabbath is to be a parenthesis between two weeks' work. From the beginning of the world a seventh of time was set apart for rest. The command to keep it holy was embodied in the ceremonial law, and began with the retrospective word "Remember!" The rest of the Sabbath must be (1) real, (2) worthy, (3) complete. It must be refreshment to body,

mind, and soul; it must not infringe upon the rest of others. The rest of a holy peace must be combined with the loving energies of an active body and an earnest mind.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 204.

REFERENCES: ii. 3.—R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, p. 18; H. F. Burder, *Sermons*, p. 369. ii. 4.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 16. ii. 4, 5.—H. Macmillan, *Bible Teachings in Nature*, p. 130. ii. 5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 465. ii. 4—iii. 24.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 77.

Chap. ii., ver. 7.—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

I. WE see from this text that it was the will of God that there should be between man and the other creatures He had formed an enormous gulf; that men were intended to be raised above the beasts altogether in kind; that they were to be not merely superior but different, as having a likeness which no other creature had, as being the image of God.

II. There can be no doubt that one great gift which Adam received from God was a highly intelligent mind, a mind capable of very great things; for we know what wonders the human mind is capable of now, and we cannot suppose that the mind which was given to the first man was of a lower order than that with which his fallen children have been blest. Adam also received from his Maker a heart pure and spotless, a heart which loved what was good because it was good; and in this respect his mind would be a reflection of the pure, holy mind of God.

III. Adam's spiritual life appears to have been supported by communion with God. His natural life, too, seems to have been continued by supernatural means. Man lost by sin those supernatural means of support which he had enjoyed before. The tree of life may have been the sacramental means of preserving man from decay; so that as long as Adam and Eve were sinless and had access to the tree of life, so long, though not by nature immortal, death had no power over them. Adam held all that he possessed upon a certain condition, and that condition was obedience to God. The command was simple and easy to obey, and yet Adam broke it and lost those blessings with which he had been endowed, and that life which God had breathed into him.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 83.

Chap. ii., ver. 7 (with chap. i., ver. 27).

In studying these chapters carefully, we find some degree of difficulty in the form of the sacred story itself. There appear to be, and in a certain sense there are, three different narratives, three distinct records of creation. We have one in the first, one in the second, and one in the fifth chapter. Why is the narrative of the creation repeated three times over?

Because man needs an account of the creation from a physical, from a moral, and from a historical point of view. The physical account we find in the first chapter of Genesis. It tells us that matter is not eternal—that, go back as far as you will, at last the world which God created came from its Maker's hand. It stands alone in its sublimity, alone in its impressive greatness, alone in its Divine and miraculous reserve. We must cling to the truth contained in the text: (1) for the answer it gives to the questions which are pressed upon every one of us by the mystery of existence; (2) for the solid hope which it gives to every one of us of a distinct, a personal and individual immortality; (3) in order to guard ourselves from the great peril of desecrating that nature which God Himself gave to us.

Bishop Alexander, *Man's Natural Life* ("Norwich Cathedral Discourses," 4th series, No. 1).

References: ii. 7.—S. R. Driver, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Oct. 25, 1883; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 108; J. Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 48; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 323; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 134; H. J. Van Dyke, *The Reality of Religion*, p. 49; R. W. Evans, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 293; Bishop Walsham How, *Plain Words to Children*, p. 29; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 3rd series, p. 76. ii. 8.—T. Chamberlain, *Sermons for Sundays, Festivals and Fasts*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 265; W. E. Boardman, *Sunday Magazine* (1876), p. 676; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 406.

Chap. ii., vers. 8, 9 (with chap. iii., vers. 22-24).—"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed, etc."

I. Our first parents are discovered in a state of innocence, beauty, and blessedness, which is broken up utterly by the transgression of the Divine command. (1) To Eden, as the first condition of human existence, all hearts bear witness. Two hymns are babbled by the echoes of the ages—"the good days of old," "the good days to come." They are the work-songs of humanity; the memory of a better, and the hope of a better, nerve and cheer mankind. That memory, Genesis

explains; that hope, the Apocalypse assures. (2) We shall err greatly if we treat Adam's history in Eden as nothing more than a fabled picture of the experience of man; rather is it the root out of which your experience and mine has grown, and in virtue of which they are other than they would have been had they come fresh from the hand of God. We recognise the law of headship which God has established in humanity, whereby Adam, by his own act, has placed his race in new and sadder relations to Nature and to the Lord. (3) The origin of evil may still remain a mystery, but this history of Eden stands between it and God. Eden is God's work, the image of His thought; and man's spirit joyfully accepts the history, and uses it as a weapon against haunting doubts about the origin of evil. (4) The sin of Adam is substantially the history of every attempt of self-will to counterwork the will of God. Every sin is a seeking for a good outside the region which, in the light of God, we know to be given us as our own.

II. This narrative presents to us the Father seeking the sinful child with blended righteousness and tenderness, assuring him of help to bear the burden which righteousness had imposed on transgression, and of redemption out of the spiritual death, which was the fruit of sin.

III. God not only, fatherlike, made wise disposition for the correction of His child, but He cast in with His child's lot of toil and suffering, His own sympathy and hope; He made Himself a partaker in man's new experience of pain, and, that He might destroy sin, linked the sufferer by a great promise to Himself.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 1.

Chap. ii., ver. 9.—"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

In the second of the three accounts of the creation we have an answer to the questions which would naturally be put by an inquiring mind, as to man's present moral state and original moral constitution. Man, though created sinless, was, from the very fact of his creaturely existence, not self-sufficing, but dependent both in body and soul, and thus the two trees of which we read in the text corresponded to those two wants in man's constitution. The tree of life is nowhere forbidden to our first parents. As long as man was able to repair his

physical constitution by approaching to and eating of the fruit of the tree of life, so long he remained deathless. We may safely conclude that the tree of life was a natural means of sustaining natural life (and probably also a sacramental means of grace), and that from the act of tasting the other tree there would result a premature familiarity with the knowledge of good and evil.

I. A mere speculative knowledge of that which is good need not be good after all. Knowledge may be a merely barren knowledge—the knowledge which speculates and admires, but does not lead on to action.

II. Much more truly is this the case with the knowledge of moral evil. People speak of the narrative of the fall—of the temptation by means of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—as a mere myth. But it lives over again in the history of individual souls. The knowledge of evil is an irreparable thing. It lives on, and springs up again and again in the memory and the conscience.

III. Creation lies under a law of suffering. Christianity strives, and not all in vain, to alleviate this primeval curse. The universe is a grand and solemn but at present a darkened temple of the Lord God. The day is coming when we shall see it lighted up, when the Gospel of Christ will bring to this earth of ours something more precious than social improvement, great and blessed as that may be.

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *Norwich Discourses*, 4th series, No. 2.

Chap. ii., ver. 9.—"The tree of knowledge of good and evil."

I. WE call the Scriptures a revelation; in other words, *an unveiling*. The Bible records were given to us to take away the veil which hung between heaven and earth, between man and God. Their purpose is to reveal God. The actual revelation which has been made to us is of God in His relation to the soul of man. We are not to demand, we are not to expect, any further revelation. Of the secrets of God's power and origin we are told not a word. Such knowledge is not for us. But it does concern us to know of God's moral nature—to know that He is all-powerful, all-good, all-loving; and of God's power, goodness, and love, the Bible is one long and continuous revelation. The self-declared object of the Scriptures is that men should know God and know themselves.

II. But the condition on which such an object may be accomplished is this: that the Book of God should appeal

to men in a form not dependent for its appreciation upon any knowledge which they may have obtained—independent, that is, of the science of any particular age or country. The setting forth of scientific truth in the pages of the Bible would have been as much a difficulty and stumbling-block to some former ages of the Church as what we call its unscientific account of natural phenomena has been to some at the present day.

III. "The tree of knowledge of good and evil." Here, so early in the sacred books, is revealed the fact of the two opposing forces of right and wrong. Take away the reality of this distinction, and the Bible and all religion falls for ever. Make its reality and importance felt in the soul of man, and you have at once whereon to build. Righteousness is the word of words throughout all Scripture. The righteousness which the Scriptures reveal is the knowledge of a communion with God. When our earth has played its part in the economy of the universe, and is seen by the few spheres which are within its ken to pass away as a wandering fire, right and wrong will not have lost their primeval significance, and the souls which have yearned and laboured for rest in the home of spirits will find that rest in Him who was and is and is to be.

A. AINGER, *Sermons preached in the Temple Church*, p. 280.

REFERENCES: ii. 9.—E. H. Plumptre, *Sunday Magazine* (1867), p. 712; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year* (*Holy Week*), p. 446; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. ii., p. 147. ii. 10.—C. A. Fowler, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 151.

Chap. ii., vers. 10-14.—"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads, etc."

ATTEMPTS have been made to find out what rivers are here spoken of by Moses, and where they are to be found. But the description in Genesis was purposely intended to baffle and defy any geographical identification. Paradise was never meant to be trampled by the feet of them that travel for pleasure or write for gain. There is no river on earth that parts itself into four heads. Are these words, then, but solemn trifling with the natural curiosity of man, affecting to tell him something, yet really telling nothing? What are we taught by this mixture of the straightforward and matter-of-fact with the (geographically speaking) impossible?

I. They teach us by a very simple parable that Paradise is real, most real; that it is intimately connected with earthly realities, but that it is not to be realised itself on earth, not to be discovered by worldly knowledge or inherited by flesh and blood.

II. The myths of the nations, entangled with false ideas of cosmogony, are broken against the hard facts of modern lore: the record of Genesis, shaking itself free from a merely earthly geography, retains its spiritual teaching and consolation for all generations. To the simple Christian this region is very real and very clear: it is his own inheritance in Christ—not, indeed, to be sought on this earth, but to be expected in that better world.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: ii. 10-14.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 201.

Chap. ii., ver. 12.—"The gold of that land is good."

I. IF men so willed, gold might be won and no soul lost. And therefore we must take care to distinguish between gold and the thirst for gold. Gold is like the rest of God's gifts, a good thing or a bad thing, according to the use made of it. And so it is no wonder that Scripture has recorded that near to Paradise was a land of gold. The land of Havilah may exist still; the fine gold and the bdellium and the onyx stone may now lie buried deep beneath its surface, or perhaps may yet be lying disregarded, like the treasures of California or Australia not many years ago.

II. Be this as it may, there is another land whose gold is good, a land farther off than the far West and the islands of the sea, and yet ever close at hand, approachable by all, attainable by all, where no rust corrupts and no thieves break through and steal. The gold of that other land is good, simply because, though the words sound like a contradiction, it is not gold. It has been changed. In the world above, that which stands for gold is more precious than gold itself, for even gold cannot purchase it, though gold may serve it.

III. The treasure of heaven is love. Love is the true gold. All else will tarnish and canker and eat into the souls of them that covet it; but Love never. It is bright and precious here in this world: fraud cannot despoil us of it; force cannot rob us of it; it is our only safe happiness here, and it is the only possession we can carry with us into the world beyond the grave.

F. E. PAGET, *Sermons for Special Occasions*, p. 167.

REFERENCES: ii. 15.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 486. ii. 16, 17.—A. W. Momerie, *The Origin of Evil*, p. 1; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 136.

Chap. ii., ver. 17.—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

THESE words comprehend the whole of humanity in their appli-

cation; every man and woman that ever has existed or shall exist on the face of the earth. This was not a positive law, but a negative one; the law of which Adam and Eve were transgressors was a prohibition, and to that prohibition was attached a penalty.

I. Look first at the prohibition: "Thou shalt not eat of it." It is perfectly obvious, from God's character and conduct with man up to this time, that the intention of this prohibition was somehow to confer a great benefit on man himself; otherwise, why should God have given the prohibition? In the case of all perfect beings a test is necessary if they are to attain the highest possible state of perfection. This test was put before Adam and Eve, and the prohibition was enforced and was in order to that result.

II. Look next at the penalty: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (1) We must determine death by the nature of the subject to which it is applicable. Death is not necessarily the mere cessation of existence. Man's life is physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; death is the converse of life in regard to each of these particulars. Life implies the giving up of the whole man to God; death is exactly the reverse, it is the man losing all this—becoming dead, as we read, "in trespasses and sins." (2) It is said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve died by becoming subject unto death. The elements of mortality were introduced, and they died spiritually by being estranged from God. In view of the redemption, in view of that Lamb who should come to die for man's sins, the curse was thrown into abeyance, the execution was necessarily deferred. It was deferred in order that an opportunity might be given to man to become acquainted with Christ, and that Christ might accomplish the work of redemption.

C. MOLYNEUX, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 136.

THESE words were fulfilled at the time they were spoken, they have been fulfilled ceaselessly thereafter. We live in a universe of death. The phenomenon is common to us, but no familiarity can rob it of its dreadfulness; for the dead, who are the more in number, have kept their awful secret unrevealed, and the child who died yesterday knows more than can be guessed at by the thousand millions of living men. Yet this death is the least and the least dreaded part of that other, that second, that spiritual death which God meant in the warning of the text.

I. Notice first the certainty of that death. Let us learn to be early undeceived about the tempter's falsehood, "Ye shall not surely die." If a man will serve his sin, let him at least reckon upon this, that in one way or other it will be ill with him; his sin will find him out; his path will be hard; there will be to him no peace. The night of concealment may be long, but dawn comes like the Erinnys to reveal and avenge its crimes.

II. Not only is this punishment inevitable, but it is natural; not miraculous, but ordinary; not sudden, but gradual; not accidental, but necessary; not exceptional, but invariable. Retribution is the impersonal evolution of an established law.

III. Retribution takes the form which of all others the sinner would passionately deprecate, for it is homogeneous with the sins on whose practice it ensues. In lieu of death God offers us His gift of eternal life. While yet we live, while yet we hear the words of invitation, the door is not shut, and we may pass to it by the narrow way. To Eve was given the dim promise that her seed should bruise the serpent's head; for us Christ has trampled sin and Satan under His feet.

F. W. FARRAR, *The Fall of Man and other Sermons*, p. 27.

REFERENCES: ii. 17.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons preached in Various Churches*, p. 50; Parker, *The Fountain* (May 9th and May 23rd, 1878), *Hidden Springs*, p. 275; H. J. Stephens, *Literary Churchman Sermons*, p. 621. ii. 18.—A. Monod, *Select Discourses from the French and German*, pp. 17, 47; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 421; G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 163. ii. 23, 24.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 2nd series, p. 84.

Chap. ii., ver. 24.—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

I. THE gift of speech to Adam was in itself a sublime prophecy that man was not to remain alone and without a companion in the garden where God had placed him. Glorious as man's condition was, there was yet a want—the shadow of some yearning hung upon his brow. The sleep that fell upon Adam was no common sleep, like that of wearied humanity; it was something higher. The old Greek translation has it "an ecstasy." It was a prophetic sleep. While he slept, the Lord God built for him a woman,—like some great architect, before whom the ideal of a glorious building has floated, until at last the time comes to pile it up visibly, and to rejoice in its exceeding beauty. When Adam awakes his language swells into a hymeneal first, and then into a prophecy

II. The idea of wedded life involves three things: unity, companionship, subordination.

III. In the old classical world, woman was incredibly degraded; but corruption and false principles on this point were directly attacked by the Gospel of Christ. The tender ties of home and family were not for Him who moved in His loneliness among the sons of men; and yet He breathed with that infinite purity of His upon the flushed and passionate cheek of woman in her home, until it grew pure again. Our homes themselves repose upon the idea of marriage, which was given to man in Eden and renewed by Jesus Christ, the Second Adam.

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *Norwich Discourses*, 4th series, No. 3.

REFERENCES: ii. 24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 77. ii., iii.—S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 31.

Chap. iii., ver. 1.—"He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

I. SATAN'S temptations begin by laying a doubt at the root. He questions; he unsettles. He does not assert error; he does not contradict truth; but he confounds both. He makes his first entries, not by violent attack, but by secret sapping; he endeavours to confuse and cloud the mind which he is afterwards going to kill.

II. The particular character of these troublesome and wicked questionings of the mind varies according to the state and temperament and character of each individual. (1) In order to combat them, every one should have his mind stored and fortified with some of the evidences of the Christian religion. To these he should recur whenever he feels disquieted; he should be able to give "a reason for the hope that is in him," and an answer to that miserable shadow that flits across his mind, "Yea, hath God said?" (2) A man must be careful that his course of life is not one giving advantage to the tempter. He must not be dallying under the shadow of the forbidden tree, lest the tempter meet him and he die.

III. The far end of Satan is to diminish from the glory of God. To mar God's design he insinuated his wily coil into the garden of Eden; to mar God's design he met Jesus Christ in the wilderness, on the mountain top, and on the pinnacle of the temple; to mar God's design he is always leading us to take unworthy views of God's nature and God's work.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 172 (*Good Words*, 1867, p. 310).

THE tempter effected his purpose in Eden: (1) by a question; (2) by a negation; (3) by a promise.

I. By a question. (1) Have we ever reflected on the tremendous power of a question? Some of the most important social and intellectual revolutions have sprung from a question. And it was through a question that the greatest of all revolutions was effected, by which man, made in the image of God, was seduced from his allegiance—a question that has carried with it consequences of which no man can foresee the end. (2) Mark the subtlety of the question. It aimed at destroying the blessed fellowship between God and man. "Men ask in vain," says Luther, "what was the particular sin to which Eve was tempted." The solicitation was to all sins when she was tempted to doubt the word and the goodwill of God.

II. The tempter makes the way to sin easy by removing all fear of the consequences. There is the negation, "Ye shall *not* surely die." We listen to the lie, and we stake our all, for time and for eternity, upon this blank and cruel negation.

III. The Satanic promise, verse 5. (1) It is malevolent: "God doth know"; He has a reason for the restriction; He dreads a rival. (2) It is fascinating: "Ye shall be as gods." The perverted pride of man's heart is the tempter's best ally.

J. J. S. PEROWNE, *Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 209. (See also *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 119; and *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 13.)

REFERENCES: iii. 1.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 348; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 113. iii. 1-5.—C. J. Vaughan, *Voices of the Prophets*, p. 237; D. Wilson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 113; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons* vol. v., p. 17; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 78, xviii., p. 83; Parker, vol. i., p. 132; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 60; N. Blackwood, *Sunday Magazine* (1885), p. 235. iii. 1-13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 551. iii. 1-16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 146. iii. 2, 3.—H. Melvill, *Sermons on Less Prominent Facts*, vol. ii., p. 107. iii. 3.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 118.

Chap. iii., ver. 4.—"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

I. THERE are many things against which God has uttered His voice in every man's heart; in which, even independently of written revelation, He has not left Himself without witness. He who lives in concealed or open sin knows full well that God hath said he shall surely die. But in the moment of temptation the certainty of ruin is met by a counter assertion of the tempter, "Thou shalt not surely die": "Do the act and cast the con-

sequences to the winds." We have a notable instance of this in the case of the prophet Balaam. Men with the full consciousness that God is against them persist in opposition to Him, till they perish; persuading themselves, from one step to another, that matters shall not turn out so badly as God's words and God's monitor within tell them that they shall.

II. There are other classes of persons, besides notorious profligates who are caught by this device, "Thou shalt not surely die. (1) God has declared, "To be carnally minded is death." To be carnally minded is to be of the mind of the children of this world, to view things through a worldly medium, to pass day by day without a thought beyond this world, and as if there were no life after this life. Of this kind of life God has said that it is *death*, that those who live it shall surely die—nay, are dying now; and by this is meant that such a life is the immortal spirit's ruin, that it breaks up and scatters and wastes all man's best and highest faculties. What can await those who frustrate the best ends of their being but misery and ruin? "Ye shall not surely die" is the tempter's fallacy with which he deludes the carnally minded. He persuades them that they can give this life to God's enemy, and yet inherit life eternal. (2) God has said, "He that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"—*i.e.*, "If ye have not the Son of God ye shall surely die." How many of us have any persuasion of the reality of this sentence of death? How many have cared enough about it to ascertain what it is *to have the Son of God?* Whosoever has not by his own personal act taken Christ as his, has not life, and must certainly die eternally: first by the very nature of things, for the desire for God has never been awakened in his heart, the guilt of sin has not been removed from him, nor its power over him broken; and then by solemn declarations of the God of truth—"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God abideth on him."

III. Mysterious as the history of our fall is, its greatest wonder is this: that God out of ruin hath brought forth fresh beauty; out of man's defeat, His victory; out of death, life glorious and eternal. *Thou shall surely live* is now the Divine proclamation to man's world. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 100.

REFERENCES: iii. 4.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 211. iii. 4, 5.—E. B. Pusey, *Lenten Sermons*, p. 107. iii. 4–6.—E. Blen-

cowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, 2nd series, p. 101. iii. 5.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 326; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 399; Parker, vol. i., p. 362. iii. 6.—H. Thompson, *Concionalia*, vol. i., p. 76; *Sermons for the Christian Seasons* (1853), 1st series, vol. i., p. 217; G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 1. iii. 6-21.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 71. iii. 6-8.—J. A. Macdonald, *The Pulpit Analyst*, vol. i., p. 301. iii. 7.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 326; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 239.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—"Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."

I. That which strikes us first of all is, that Adam represents the average sinner. A man may do worse than Adam. Many men have done and do worse than hide themselves from God after outraging Him by sin. Adam's conduct proves that the sense of God's presence, awfulness, greatness, was still intact in his soul.

II. "They hid themselves." It was not the result of a consultation; it was an instinct. Two motives would concurrently have determined the action of Adam. (1) Fear. God's greatness was now the measure of the terror of the creature who had dared to disobey Him. (2) Shame. Adam had felt a fear of God in his unfallen life which differed from the cowering fear of his guilty conscience much as a healthy circulation of the blood might differ from the pulse of fever. But shame was an absolutely new thing, unlike any other capacity or experience in himself with which our first father had been previously acquainted. As the greatness of God was the measure of Adam's fear, so his own lost greatness was the measure of Adam's shame.

III. "Amongst the trees of the garden." The trees beneath the shade of which the human soul seeks refuge from its God are: (1) pleasure; (2) occupation; (3) moral rationalism.

IV. We have no difficulty in characterising this act of Adam as foolish and irrational. It was so: (1) because it was to attempt the impossible; and (2) because it was to fly from the one hope and opening for restoration and safety.

H. P. Liddon, *Cambridge Lent Sermons*, 1864, p. 23.

References: iii. 8.—H. Hayman, *Rugby School Chapel*, p. 159; W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 212; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 1; H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 241; C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 41; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 184; J. H. Blunt, *Miscellaneous Sermons by Clergymen of the Church of England*, p. 93; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), pp. 138, 209; G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 16.

Chap. iii., vers. 8, 9.—"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden, etc."

As the account of Eve's temptation and fall truly represents the course of corruption and sin, so the behaviour of our first parents afterwards answers exactly to the feelings and conduct of those who have forfeited their innocence and permitted the devil to seduce them into actual sin. Shame makes the sinner shrink and draw back, and not endure to have his thoughts and doings watched by any eye whatever. As often as he sins wilfully, he must secretly wish there were no God to see him, and he will be tempted to do all he can to forget God, and so hide himself for a time from His presence.

I. Any one sin, wilfully indulged, leads to profaneness and unbelief, and tends to blot the very thought of God out of our hearts.

II. Much in the same way are backsliding Christians led to invent or accept notions of God and His judgment, as though He in His mercy permitted them to be hidden and covered, when in truth they cannot be so.

III. The same temper naturally leads us to be more or less false towards men also, trying to seem better than we are; delighting to be praised, though we know how little we deserve it. Among particular sins it would seem that two especially dispose the heart towards this kind of falsehood: (1) sensuality; (2) dishonesty.

IV. When any Christian person has fallen into sin and seeks to hide himself from the presence of the Lord, God is generally so merciful that He will not suffer that man to be at ease and forget Him. He calls him out of his hiding-place, as He called Adam from among the trees. No man is more busy in ruining himself, and hiding from the face of his Maker, than He, our gracious Saviour, is watchful to awaken and save him.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. viii., p. 34.

REFERENCES: iii. 8, 9.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 139; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 1.

Chap. iii., ver. 9.—"And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

I. NOTE here the anticipative sentence of the human conscience pronouncing doom on itself. The guilty rebel hides from the Divine Presence.

II. The inexorable call which brings him immediately into the Divine Presence.

III. The bringing to light of the hidden things of darkness. The soul has many hiding-places. There are: (1) The hiding-place of self-complacent propriety; (2) the hiding-place of the reasoner; (3) the hiding-place of theological dogmas. But the true hiding-place for the soul is Jesus.

W. HAY AITKEN, *Mission Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

I. THE speaker is God; the person spoken to is the representative of us all.

II. The call is: (1) individual; (2) universal.

III. God calls in three ways: (1) in conscience; (2) in providence; (3) in revelation.

IV. His call is: (1) to attention; (2) to recognition of God's being; (3) to reflection on our own place and position.

V. It is a call which each must answer for himself, and which each ought to answer without delay.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3263.

HERE God asks an important question: "Where art thou?" (1) Where are you?—are you in God's family or out of it? When you are baptised, you are put into God's family upon certain conditions—that you will do certain things; and it depends upon you how you live, because if you do not love God you cannot be God's child. (2) Supposing you are one of God's children, "Where art thou?"—near to thy Father or far from Him?—because some children are nearer to their fathers than others. Mary and Martha were sisters, and they were both Christians, but one was much nearer to Christ than the other. Mary sat at Jesus' feet, Martha was "troubled about many things." If we delight to tell Jesus everything, then we shall be near God. (3) Are you in the sunshine or the shade? If you follow Christ you will always be in the sunshine, because He is the Sun. (4) Are you in the path of duty? Are you where you ought to be? The path of duty is a narrow path, sometimes a steep path. God could say to many of us, as He said to Elijah, "What doest thou here?"—thou art out of the path of duty. (5) How have you progressed? The surest way to know that we get on is to be very humble. When the wheat is ripe it hangs down; the full ears hang the lowest.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons to Children*, 1875, p. 177.

REFERENCES: iii. 9.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 129; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 5; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 412; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons* (1887), p. 276.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

How deep are the lessons involved in the story of the fall, and how little are they affected by any of the numerous criticisms to which it has given rise! The lessons to be here learnt are moral, not ethnological; spiritual, not scientific. For even if the facts be not literal, they remain divinely and unalterably true. The history is no dead letter, but a living symbol; it contains the very essence and principle of the whole matter, and he who would have a thorough insight into the origin of sin may learn more from these few and simple verses than from all else that the united energy of mankind has ever discovered on the subject with which they deal.

I. The first lesson from the story of the fall is the necessity for constant watchfulness. None, not even the oldest warrior, can ever in this world lay aside one piece of his panoply; for our warfare is a warfare in which there is no discharge. At the door of *your* hearts, no less than at that of the first murderer, sin is crouching like some wild beast of prey; but "subject unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

II. Beware of underrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Echo not the scornful and faithless question, "Yea, hath God said?" Woe be to the man who dares to exalt his petty impotence against the divine majesty of the moral law! To violate it is a peril, to deny it a blasphemy which brings its own crushing Nemesis behind.

III. Beware of the theory that sin indeed may be sinful, but that no strict notice will be taken, no stern account exacted for the sins of your youth; beware of the wicked and perilous theory that you can sow your wild oats now. Reverence yourselves in reverencing the high and merciful commands of God. You are called by this high calling to be holy and pure.

F. W. FARRAR, *The Fall of Man and other Sermons*, p. 1

Chap. iii., ver. 10 (with Psalm cxliii. 9).

I. CONSIDER, first, the sinner hiding himself. Some common retreats of the sinner are: (1) complete thoughtlessness; (2) the occupations of life; (3) the moralities of life; (4) the forms and observances of religion.

II. Adam is the type of the fleeing sinner. David is the type of the fleeing saint: "I flee unto Thee to hide me," (1) from the terrors of the law; (2) from the hostility and the hatred of men;

(3) from the trials and calamities of life; (4) from the fear and the tyranny of death.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting-places*, p. 235.

REFERENCE: iii. 11.—J. Purchas, *Miscellaneous Sermons by Clergymen of the Church of England*, p. 25.

Chap. iii., ver. 12.—"And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

I. ADAM, we find, was not content to be in the image of God. He and his wife wanted to be as gods, knowing good and evil. He wanted to be independent, and show that he knew what was good for him: he ate the fruit which he was forbidden to eat, partly because it was fair and well-tasted, but still more to show his own independence. When he heard the voice of the Lord, when he was called out, and forced to answer for himself, he began to make pitiful excuses. He had not a word to say for himself. He threw the blame on his wife. It was all the woman's fault, —indeed, it was God's fault. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

II. What Adam did once we have done a hundred times, and the mean excuse which Adam made but once we make again and again. But the Lord has patience with us, as He had with Adam, and does not take us at our word. He knows our frame and remembers that we are but dust. He sends us out into the world, as He sent Adam, to learn experience by hard lessons, to eat our bread in the sweat of our brow till we have found out our own weakness and ignorance, and have learned that we cannot stand alone, that pride and self-dependence will only lead us to guilt and misery and shame and meanness; that there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved from them, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. KINGSLEY, *The Good News of God*, p. 347.

REFERENCE: iii. 12.—Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 85.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—"And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

I. THE record before us is the history of the first sin. It needed no revelation to tell us that sin is, that mankind is sinful. Without, within, around, and inside us, is the fact, the experience, the evidence, the presence of sin. It is sin which makes life troublous and gives death its sting. The revelation of the fall tells of an entrance, of an inburst of evil into a world all

good, into a being created upright,—tells, therefore, of a nature capable of purity, of an enemy that may be expelled, and of a holiness possible because natural. From man's fall we infer a fall earlier yet and more mysterious. Once sin was not; and when it entered man's world it entered under an influence independent, not inherent.

II. The first sin is also the specimen sin. It is in this sense, too, the original sin, that all other sins are copies of it. Unbelief first, then disobedience; then corruption, then self-excusing; then the curse and the expulsion,—turn the page and you shall find a murder!

III. The original sin is also the infectious sin. The New Testament derives this doctrine from the history, that there is a taint or corruption in the race by reason of the fall; that it is not only a following of Adam by the deliberate independent choice of each one of us which is the true account of our sinning; but this rather,—an influence and infection of evil, derived and inherited by us from all that ancestry of the transgressor. Not one man of all the progeny of Adam has drawn his first breath or his latest in an atmosphere pure and salubrious. Before, behind him, around and above, there has been the heritage of weakness, the presence and pressure of an influence in large part evil. Fallen sons of a fallen forefather, God must send down His hand from above if we are to be rescued ever out of these deep, these turbid waters.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Half-hours in the Temple Church*, p. 55 (also *Good Words*, 1870, p. 331).

REFERENCES: iii. 13.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 32; J. H. Newman, *Oxford University Sermons*, p. 136; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 83.

Chap. iii., vers. 14, 15.—"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, etc."

SEVERAL important difficulties suggest themselves in the text.

I. The scientific difficulty. The serpent really bears no trace of degradation; its structure is as beautifully adapted to its place in nature as that of the lion or the eagle. Neither can it be said to eat dust: its food consists of the small animals which are its prey.

II. The moral objection. Why was the serpent punished for what he did not do? Shall God visit the craft of the devil on his helpless and unconscious victim?

The answer is, These two objections neutralise each other. If the moralist tells us that God *could not* have meant to punish

the serpent for what the serpent did not do, the man of science assures us that in fact He *did not* punish him. The real severity of the sentence lighted on the real offender, the devil, while the mere form of it was accommodated to the apparent structure and habits of the serpent.

III. If it was the tempter that sinned, why did not the Almighty sentence him openly as the tempter? Because there is a very marked reserve in the Old Testament on the subject of the personal author of evil. The reason of this is obvious: men were not able to bear the knowledge of their great spiritual enemy until their Deliverer was at hand. If we perceive that it was not the will of God at that time to reveal to man the existence of the evil one, we can readily understand why He permitted him to retain his serpent guise.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 8.

REFERENCES: iii. 14, 15.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 56; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 199. iii. 14-24.—J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, pp. 133, 156.

Chap. iii., ver. 15.—"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel."

I. THE first intention of the work of Christ upon this earth is a declaration of war: His warfare and our warfare; the warfare of persons and the warfare of "seeds"; of the two great principles of good and evil.

II. Christ did bruise and crush the serpent's head—his strength, his being, his whole vitality. He fought alone in each great single combat. When the cross was reared against the power of the arch-enemy the crushing was complete; and when He, Conqueror over the conquered grave, rose again, then the crushed head had received its death-blow.

III. The worst possible position in which men can be placed is a state in which there is no inward spiritual conflict. Quiet in the soul is the quiet of the grave. Where there is conflict there is life.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 53.

I. NOTICE the fall as a history. The consequences of the fall were: (1) shame; (2) fear; (3) self-excusing; (4) punishment; (5) an exclusion from the original Paradise and from the tree of immortal life within it.

II. Notice the fall in its typical and representative character. (1) Something is presen tion. Ponderings of

sin, parleyings with temptation—these are the things which we must resist, if we would keep ourselves unspotted and pure in the great matter of the soul's life. (2) For see how bold the tempter becomes who has once got a hearing. He ventures upon challenging God's prohibition; says out, "Ye shall not surely die." (3) Sin cannot rest till it has drawn others in. The woman must make her husband eat; the friend corrupts his friend; the brother entices his brother; and so a deluge of misery enters the world in one drop of sin. (4) Man, even fallen man, differs from the evil spirit in this,—that he still, at least in the early days, is conscious to himself of his own sin; is but half its friend; has many misgivings and many self-reproaches, even though his life is defiled and spoilt with transgression; and herein lies for man a possibility of redemption, which for fallen angels is not.

III. Notice the fall in its reversal. (1) Read as a reversal of Adam's fall the record of our Lord's temptation. Then did the "strong man armed" meet a stronger than himself, and retire from the encounter foiled and vanquished. (2) Thus has it been in a lower degree with all who in Christ's name have gone forth to the conflict with temptation. (3) Read finally in this light the last chapters of the Book of God.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Christ the Light of the World*, p. 112.

THIS text contains: (1) a promise of Christ; (2) a prophecy of His sufferings; (3) a prophecy of His final triumph.

R. W. DIBDIN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1872.

I. THE first time Prophecy opened her lips, it was to pronounce these words. To our first parents they were full of hope and consolation. In some mysterious way their loss was to be repaired; a Deliverer was to be provided. This promise was all their Bible. What, in truth, is all the rest of Scripture but the development of this great primeval promise of a Redeemer?

II. Never for an instant was this tremendous announcement absent from the recollection of the enemy of our race. Thoroughly versed in Scripture (as the history of the temptation proves), he watched with intense anxiety the progress of prophetic announcement to mankind concerning One that was to come.

III. It is not to be supposed for an instant that Satan understood the mystery of our Lord's Incarnation. Caught in the depths of that unimaginable mystery, he did not know until it was too late that it was Very and Eternal God with whom

he had entered into personal encounter. Repulsed in the wilderness, he was made fully aware of the personal advent of his great Enemy. At the death of Christ the kingdom which he had been consolidating for four thousand years was in a single moment shattered to its base.

IV. The history of the fall plainly intimates that on the side of the flesh man is most successfully assaulted by temptation, Four thousand years of warfare have convinced the enemy of our peace that on *this* side the citadel is weakest, is most easily surprised, is most probably captured.

J. W. BURGON, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Feb. 19th, 1880.

REFERENCES: iii. 15.—Phillips Brooks, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 93; S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 14; J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 98; H. Melvill, *Sermons*, p. 1; J. G. Murphy, *The Book of Daniel*, p. 3; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1326; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 9; C. H. Bromby, *Good Words* (1879), p. 169; W. Arnot, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 68; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), pp. 351, 352; R. Glover, *By the Waters of Babylon*, p. 218; A. B. Grosart, *Congregationalist*, vol. ii., p. 170.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—"Cursed is the ground for thy sake."

THE ground is our first lesson-book. Notice (1) A man does not cultivate the land by waving his hand majestically over it. The land says, "If you want anything out of me you must work for it. I answer labour, I respond to industry, I reply to the importunity of toil." That is the great law of social progress. (2) The ground does not obey the dashing and angry passions of any man. The green field does not turn white, though you curse over it till you foam again at the mouth. We cannot compel nature to keep pace with our impatience; man cannot hasten the wheel of the seasons; he cannot drive nature out of its calm and solemn movement; his own fields keep him at bay. (3) Then I see God stooping and writing with His finger on the ground, and when He erects Himself and withdraws, behold the Bible He has written. "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain"; "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." See the earth inscribed with terms like these, and learn from the land how to live. (4) Spiritual cultivation, like the culture of the land, cannot be hastened. You cannot extemporise moral greatness; it is a slow growth. (5) Spiritual cultivation is sometimes very hard.

Circumstances are heavily against us; we are not placed in favourable localities, or under very gracious conditions. Let us be thankful to God if, though faint, we are still pursuing.

PARKER, vol. i., p. 138.

I. THE text suggests some of the mysteries by which we are surrounded. There is (1) the universal fact of sin everywhere existing; (2) the sorrow which is stamped upon the whole race; (3) the toil that is a condition of humanity.

II. The text supplies a solution by which these mysteries are brought into reconciliation with right views of the nature and character of the Eternal. Out of man's evil and man's transgression God contrives blessing. Sorrow in itself is an apparent evil; as God manages it, it is the harbinger of joy. It was the curse, but it also brings the blessing. There is hardness and difficulty in toil, but in occupation God has given us enjoyment. It keeps the mind and heart in active and energetic power. Even the curse of sin becomes in God's hands a blessing. There is no brighter happiness for man than the sense of being forgiven.

A. BOYD, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 209.

REFERENCES: iii. 17, 18.—H. Macmillan, *Two Worlds are Ours*, p. 62; E. Irving, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 1025. iii. 17-19.—G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 29.

Chap. iii., vers. 17-19.

THIS was almost the first curse revealed to us as pronounced by God, and yet it is almost the first blessing.

I. At first sight we are *not* prepared to admit that labour is a blessing. We shrink from the misery of task-work, which must be got through when we are least fitted to carry it on; the very word repose suggests all that is most coveted by men. It was a true instinct which led the old mythologist to invent the fable of Sisyphus and his stone, and to see in that punishment an image of horrible torture. Labour which is only laborious is and always must be grievous to endure.

II. On all the sons of Adam there is an absolute necessity of labour imposed. We may recognise the necessity and submit to it with gratitude, and then we find in it every hour a blessing; or we may rebel against it, and then we turn it as far as we can into a curse. The sweetness of leisure consists in the change from our ordinary employments, not in a cessation of all employment.

III. Lying side by side with the blessing of labour there is also a curse. "Thorns also and thistles shall the earth bring forth," says God. Work is grievous and irksome when it is unfruitful—when, after much toil, there is nothing to show. But let us be sure that if the work is done for God's glory, and in His name, the fruit will spring up in His time.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 253

REFERENCE: iii. 17-19.—J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 189.

Chap. iii., ver. 19 (with Psalm xvi. 6).—**"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, etc."**

NOTICE: I. The necessity of toil, of hard, stern, constant strain, is at first connected with transgression. Like death, it is the child of sin. This broad fact of human experience is symbolised in the narrative of the expulsion from Eden, and the sentence on earth as well as on man (iii. 17). There is blessing in toil to him who can get up into the higher regions and see how out of the very extremity of human pain and endurance God can bring forth fruits which shall be rich and fair throughout eternity. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, of toil or suffering which is other than blessed to the man who believes.

II. Consider what is the fundamental principle of this ordinance of toil. (1) It is ordained to restore man to a true and living relation with the whole system of things around him. Transgression placed him in a false relation to everything within and around him—to the constitution of his own nature, to the world, to man, and to God. He thought to be master in this world: God made him serve with a hard service, to break his strong, imperious will to obedience again. Toil is the beginning of obedience; it is a submission to the Divine law. On this sentence of labour God bases all His culture of our spirits; by this He keeps alive the desire and the hope of deliverance. (2) Toil is ordained to draw forth the full unfolding of the whole power and possibility of man's being, with a view to the system of things before him, the world of his eternal citizenship, his perfect and developed life. Be sure that it is the last strain that drags out the most precious fibre of faculty, or trains the organs to the keenest perception, the most complete expansion, the most perfect preparation for the higher work and joy of life.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 321.

Chap. iii., ver. 19.—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

I. Men know not that they shall die, even though they confess it with their lips almost daily. If we consider what death is, we see that men who know its approach will act in all things as in the fear of it. There is no more startling paradox in the wonders of our nature than this, that men in general are thoughtless about death. When our own turn comes and there is no escape, then, for the first time, we really believe in death.

II. Death is a fearful thing, because of the great change that it implies in all our being. Life is that power by which we act and think and love and intend and hope. And suppose that all our energies have been wasted on things that cannot follow us into the grave, then how can we conceive of any life at all beyond this? When we know that we must die, we feel about for something in us that shall not perish, some thread of continuity to knit our present and future life into one; and if we have never lived for God, never realised the difference between treasures of earth and treasures of heaven, we find nothing that shall assure us of that other life. We start back in horror from a grave so dark and so profound.

III. If these two terrors were all, some at least would not fear to die, would even court death as a repose. But there is yet another terror. Death means judgment. To die is to meet God. You tremble because you stand before a Judge of infinite power, whose wrath no man can resist; before a Judge of infinite wisdom, who shall call back your acts out of the distant past and lay bare the secret thoughts of your spirit.

IV. Accept the salvation purchased for you with Christ's passion, then death cannot come suddenly upon you, for the thought of it will have sobered all your days. The day of account will still be terrible, but the belief that you are reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus will sustain you.

Archbishop Thomson, *Life in the Light of God's Word*, p. 25.

References: iii. 19.—H. Alford, *Sermons*, p. 228; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, vol. v., p. 32; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, 2nd series, vol i., p. 137; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 487. iii. 20.—L. D. Bevan, *Christ and the Age*, p. 227.

Chap. iii, ver. 21.—"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

An ancient interpreter of Scripture has not scrupled to declare that there are in the Book of Revelation as many mysteries as

there are words. True as the words are as applied to that wonderful book, they are truer still in regard of the first three chapters of Genesis, above all in regard of this third chapter; for this assuredly is the most important chapter in the Bible. Among all its mysteries I must limit myself to the one contained in the words of the text. These words have a sense upon the surface, but also a sense below the surface. As a record of the kindness of God they would indeed be precious; but how infinitely more precious when we read in them and draw out of them what better they contain even than this; when they reveal to us the deeper mystery which lies behind!

The whole mystery of justification is wrapped up in the details of this story.

I. We have the fact as in a parable that man is utterly impotent to bring to pass any satisfying righteousness of his own. He can see his shame, but he cannot effectually cover or conceal it. The garments of our own righteousness are fig-leaves all, and we shall prove them such. Let God once call to us, and we shall find how little all these devices of our own can do for us. We shall stand shivering, naked and ashamed, before Him.

II. While we thus learn that man cannot clothe himself, we learn also that God undertakes to clothe him. As elsewhere He has said in word, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," so here He says in act, "I am the Lord that clotheth thee." He can yet devise a way by which His banished shall return to Him.

III. We note in this Scripture that the clothing which God found for Adam could only have been obtained at the cost of a life, and *that* the life of one unguilty, of one who had no share or part in the sin which made the providing of it needful. We have here the first institution of sacrifice; God Himself is the institutor. It is a type and shadow, a prelude and prophecy of the crowning sacrifice on Calvary.

Are not the lessons which we may draw from all this plain and palpable enough? (1) There is no robe of our own righteousness which can cover us and conceal our shame. (2) That righteousness which we have not in ourselves we must be content and thankful to receive at the hands of God. (3) Not Christ by His life, but by His life and *death*, and mainly by His death, supplies these garments for our 'spirits' need.

R. C. Trench, *Sermons preached in Westminster Abbey*, p. 118.

References: iii. 21.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 181; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 210; L. D. Bevan, *Christ and the Age*, p. 209.

Chap. iii., ver. 22 —"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."

THE temptation under which man fell in paradise was an ambitious curiosity after knowledge which was not allowed him; next came the desire of the eyes and the flesh; but the forbidden tree was called the tree of *knowledge*; the tempter promised knowledge, and after the fall Almighty God pronounced, as in the text, that man had gained it. What is so miserably seen in the history of our first parents has been the temptation and sin of their posterity ever since,—indulgence in forbidden, unlawful, hurtful, unprofitable knowledge. (1) Notice that evil curiosity which stimulates young persons to intrude into things of which it is their blessedness to be ignorant. (2) The pursuit of science, which characterises these times, is very likely to draw us aside into sin of this particular kind, if we are not on our guard. (3) There are persons who boast themselves of what they call their knowledge of the world and of life. There are men who look upon acquaintance with evil as part of their education. (4) Another very different class of persons who study evil and pride themselves upon it, and are degraded by it, are those who indulge themselves in contemplating and dwelling on the struggle between right and wrong in their own minds. Even when used rightly, the knowledge of sin is not without its danger. The love of God alone can give such knowledge its right direction.

Reflections such as these show how different is our state from that for which God made us. He meant us to be simple and we are unreal; He meant us to think no evil, and a thousand associations, bad, trifling, or unworthy, attend our every thought. But Christ has purchased for us what we lost in Adam, our garment of innocence. He has bid us and enabled us to become as little children. He has purchased for us the grace of *simplicity*. Let us pray God to give us this great and precious gift.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times," vol. v., p. 335. (See also J. H. Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 256.)

REFERENCES: iii. 22.—J. Martineau, *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 313; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 1; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 86; L. D. Bevan, *Christ and the Age*, pp. 193, 243. iii. 23.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 115.

Chap. iii., ver. 24 (and Rom. vii., 24, 25).—"So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

I. MAN'S fallen life, viewed externally and internally.

(1) Externally. Man was condemned to toil and sorrow, no longer fed by the sacramental fruit of the tree of life, exiled from the garden and debarred from entering the gate, which was closed against him by mysterious shapes and by points of flickering fire. The echoes of sin and sorrow, of care and business and pleasure, that are wakened up for us in the fourth chapter, are the beginning of the moral and physical history of man as he now is.

(2) Internally. Strange and terrible possibilities of sin lurk in this human nature of ours. Who can measure the possible distance between himself now and himself twenty years hence? There seem evermore to be two wills in the mystery of the one will. There seem to be two men in the one man,—the two wills and two men of whom the apostle speaks in our text.

II. The redeemed life. As we have placed Adam at the head of the fallen life, we place Christ at the head of the redeemed life. Christ is here in these opening chapters of Genesis. Dim and indistinct the promise must be admitted to be; just as on some pale winter morning we see a shape dimly in the mirror, and yet recognise it because we have known it before, so in that dim winter morning of prophecy we can see Christ in that first promise, because we have met Him before in the Gospel and the Church.

The redeemed life includes: (1) forgiveness; (2) an emancipated will. In Christ Jesus the fallen life may pass into the redeemed life; in Him, exiles as we are, we may win a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates and pass into the city which is our home.

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *Norwich Cathedral Discourses*, 4th series, No. 4. (See also *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 65.)

THE world was created (1) that it might be a place to exhibit the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) that it might be a system of probation. Adam was placed in probation; Christ was placed in probation; the life of every man is probation.

I. The temptation of Adam and the temptation of Christ were in the main the same. Both had their trial in three great seductions: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

II. In both the sin, if they had committed it, would have been one and the same.

III. While the probation and the guilt were the same in both, Christ's temptation was severer than Adam's. Adam had nothing resting upon him but his own responsibility; Christ was carrying the burden of a world. Adam was invited to the mere gratification of his own appetite; Christ had set before Him a specious miracle—the glory of God and the advancement of an empire which might be held for mighty ends. Yet Adam fell and Christ rose. Adam's falling dragged us down; Christ's rising drew us up.

IV. Note the exceeding mercy which placed at the east of the garden of Eden "Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Eating of that tree after the fall would have perpetuated a being marred and disgraced. Love barred the way, that man might not go on with his self-destruction.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 122.

Genesis iii.

CONSIDER: (1) some of the consequences, and (2) some of the corroborative proofs of the fall.

I. Beside and behind the outward consequences, there were inward results far more terrible. A disease had appeared on earth of the most frightful and inveterate kind. This disease was (1) a moral disease. The grand disease of sin combines all the evil qualities of bodily distempers in a figurative yet real form, and turns not the body, but the soul, into a mass of malady. (2) The disease is universal in its ravages. The entire being is incrusted with this leprosy. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. (3) This disease is deep-seated in its roots. Its roots are in the very centre of the system, and it infects all the springs of life. It makes us cold and dead and languid in the pursuit of things that are good. The enemy, through the subtle power of this disease, has penetrated into the very citadel of man, and waves his flag of victory upon its highest battlements. (4) This disease is hereditary. It is within us as early as existence; it descends from parent to child more faithfully than the family features or disposition or intellect. (5) This is a disease which assumes various forms and aspects. Its varieties are as numerous as the varieties of men and of sinners. In that great hospital, that magnificent madhouse called the earth, we

find all kinds and degrees of moral disease, from the fever of ambition to the consumption of envy, from the frantic fury of the conqueror to the dull idiocy of the miser. (6) This is a disease which defies all human means of cure, and a disease which, if not cured, will terminate in everlasting destruction.

II. Apart from the declarations of God's word, there are strong and startling proofs of a fall. (1) There are all those dreadful phenomena mentioned above, which are connected with man's present diseased moral condition. (2) The doctrine of a fall alone explains the anomalous and ambiguous condition of man. The fracture he has suffered has, in its very fierceness and depth, opened up a light into his structure. From the great inequality of human character we cannot but conclude that a catastrophe must have overwhelmed the whole mass of mankind and reduced them to a medley of confusion. We find the echo of man's fall in every strain of primeval song and in every breath of old tradition.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., pp. 98, 130.

REFERENCES: iii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 24; J. Wells, *Bible Echoes*, p. 19; J. Brown, *Good Words* (1885), p. 676; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 79.

Chap. iv., vers. 3-5; Heb. xi. 4.—"And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, etc."

WE learn from our text: I. That religion actuated men in the very earliest times. (1) Religion as a principle was found in the members of the first human family. The most prominent thing connected with Cain and Abel was their religion. (2) All nations of men have practised religion. Conscience, like the unresting heart that sends its crimson streams through the system, and so perpetuates its life, is untiringly impelling men to die to sin and live to God. (3) The religious is the most perfect type of manhood known. Humanity at its best is to be found only in the highest Christian state.

II. That mere natural religion is essentially defective. (1) In its offerings. Cain recognised only a God of providence in his offering; he did not feel that he needed to sacrifice as a sinner. (2) In the power which it exercises over the passions of man. Cain held a religion, but his religion did not hold him. (3) In its sympathy. Cain's heartless question "Am I my brother's keeper?" marks him out as a stranger to grace.

III. That spiritual religion alone commends a man to God. This is illustrated in the life of Abel. (1) He possessed faith. (2) He offered an acceptable sacrifice to God. (3) Spiritual religion has a favourable influence on character. The quality of Abel's piety, its depth and spirituality, cost him his life, and made him at the same time the first martyr for true religion.

D. RHYS JENKINS, *The Eternal Life*, p. 49.

REFERENCES: iv. 1.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 277. iv. 2.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 20. iv. 3-5.—M. G. Pearse, *Some Aspects of the Blessed Life*, p. 62.

Chap. iv., vers. 3-7.

I. THE first question to be asked is this: What did Cain and Abel know about sacrifice? Although we should certainly have expected Moses to inform us plainly if there had been a direct ordinance to Adam or his sons concerning the offering of fruits or animals, we have no right to expect that he should say more than he has said to make us understand that they received a much more deep and awful kind of communication. If he has laid it down that man is made in the image of God, if he has illustrated that principle after the fall by showing how God met Adam in the garden in the cool of the day and awakened him to a sense of his disobedience, we do not want any further assurance that the children he begat would be born and grow up under the same law.

II. It has been asked again, Was not Abel right in presenting the animal and Cain wrong in presenting the fruits of the earth? I must apply the same rule as before. We are not told this; we may not put a notion of ours into the text. Our Lord revealed Divine analogies in the sower and the seed, as well as in the shepherd and the sheep. It cannot be that he who in dependence and submission offers Him of the fruits of the ground, which it is his calling to rear, is therefore rejected, or will not be taught a deeper love by other means, if at present he lacks it.

III. The sin of Cain—a sin of which we have all been guilty—was that he supposed God to be an arbitrary Being, whom he by his sacrifice was to conciliate. The worth of Abel's offering arose from this: that he was weak, and that he cast himself upon One whom he knew to be strong; that he had the sense of death, and that he turned to One whence life must come; that he had the sense of wrong, and that he fled to One who must be right. His sacrifice was the mute expression of this helplessness, dependence, confidence.

From this we see: (*a*) that sacrifice has its ground in something deeper than legal enactments; (*b*) that sacrifice infers more than the giving up of a thing; (*c*) that sacrifice has something to do with sin, something to do with thanksgiving; (*d*) that sacrifice becomes evil and immoral when the offerer attaches any value to his own act and does not attribute the whole worth of it to God.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: iv. 4.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 374; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 281.

Chap. iv., vers. 4-5.—"And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

THERE are two things which distinguish the Bible from every other book: the view it gives us of man, and the view it gives us of God. The one is so human, the other so Divine; the one so exactly consistent with what we ourselves see of man, the other so exactly consistent with what we ourselves should expect in God,—in other words, with what our own conscience, which is God's voice within, recognises as worthy of God, and ratifies where it could not have originated.

I. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect." Whence this distinction? Was there anything in the material of the two offerings which made the one acceptable and the other offensive? Have we any right to say, apart from the express language of Scripture, that by bringing an animal in sacrifice Abel showed a clear perception of the true way of atonement, and that by bringing of the fruits of the earth Cain proved himself a self-justifier, a despiser of propitiation? In the absence of express guidance we dare not assert with confidence that it was in the material of the two offerings that God saw the presence or the absence of an acceptable principle. In proportion as we lay the stress of the difference more upon the spirit and less upon the form of the sacrifice, we shall be more certainly warranted by the inspired word and more immediately within the reach of its application to ourselves.

II. It was by faith that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. It was because of the presence of faith in Abel that God had respect unto him and to his offering. And so it is now. The worship of one is accepted and the worship of another disregarded, because one has faith and another has no faith. The

worship of faith is the concentrated energy of the life of faith. Where God sees this, there He has respect to our offering; where God sees not this, to that person and to his offering He has not respect.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lessons of Life and Godliness*, p. 34.

REFERENCES: iv. 5-15.—R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 97. iv. 6-7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1929.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

THE key to the interpretation of these words is to remember that they describe what happens after and because of wrong-doing. They are all suspended on "If thou doest not well." The word translated here "lieth" is employed only to express the *crouching* of an animal, and frequently of a wild animal: "Unto thee shall be *its* desire, and thou shalt rule over *it*." Words like these were spoken to Eve: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." In horrible parody of the wedded union and love, we have the picture of the sin that was thought of as crouching at the sinner's door like a wild beast, now, as it were, wedded to him.

I. Think of the wild beast which we tether to our doors by our wrong-doing. Every human deed is immortal; the transitory evil thought or word or act, which seems to fleet by like a cloud, has a permanent being, and hereafter haunts the life of the doer as a real presence. This memory has in it everything you ever did. A landscape may be hidden by mists, but a puff of wind will clear them away, and it will all be there, visible to the farthest horizon.

II. The next thought is put into a strong and, to our modern notions, somewhat violent metaphor—the horrible longing, as it were, of sin toward the sinner: "Unto thee shall be its desire." Our sins act towards us as if they desired to draw our love to themselves. When once a man has done a wrong thing it has an awful power of attracting him and making him hunger to do it again. All sin is linked together in a slimy tangle, like a field of seaweed, so that the man once caught in its oozy fingers is almost sure to be drowned.

III. The command here is also a promise. "Sin lies at thy door—rule thou over it." The text proclaims only duty, but it has hidden in its very hardness a sweet kernel of promise. For what God commands God enables us to do. The words do

really point onwards through all the ages to the great fact that Jesus Christ, God's own Son, came down from heaven, like an athlete descending into the arena, to fight with and to overcome the grim wild beasts, our passions and our sins, and to lead them transformed in the silken leash of His love.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 171.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Notebook*, p. 1; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 329; A. W. Momerie, *The Origin of Evil*, p. 101; B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 489.

Chap. iv., vers. 8-13.

SIN finds in the very constitution of the human mind the enginery of its own retribution.

I. The very consciousness of sin is destructive of a sinner's peace.

II. Sin tends to develop sin.

III. The consciousness of guilt is always more or less painfully attended with the apprehension of its discovery.

IV. A foreboding of judicial and eternal retribution is incident to sin.

V. From all this we see the preciousness of the work of Christ. He becomes a reality to us, only because He is a necessity. He gives Himself to blot out the past.

A. PHELPS, *The Old Testament a Living Book for all Ages*, p. 137.

Chap. iv., ver. 9.—"Am I my brother's keeper?"

THE feeling of our sonship to God in Christ is a topic which requires to be constantly dwelt upon, because our conventional acceptance of such a relationship is apt to be compatible with a life which has no real apprehension of it.

I. Of the dangers which are partly rooted in our animal nature and partly fostered and intensified by the drift of our time, the one likely to press most heavily on us is that of exaggerated individualism. Where this is not tempered by an infusion of the religious spirit, we find it working with a disintegrating power, and in various ways vitiating both our personal and social life.

II. Almost every advance of civilisation which distinguishes our century has tended to give this principle some new hold on the common life. There is no corner of society, commercial or social, political or artistic, which it does not invade. The volume of its force is intensified as wealth increases and easy

circumstances become more common. Our time is pre-eminently a time of materialistic egoism.

III. The evolutionist, telling us of the growth of all our sentiments, taking us back to germinal forms and then leading us upward through struggle and survival, makes the ruling motive in every early life essentially egoistic. The question arises, Where and how is this motive to change its character? Is this last utterance to be still but an echo of the primeval question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" If this be the last word, we must repeat again, however sadly—*Ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανε.*

IV. But we cannot rest in this conclusion. There is no possibility of rest until we have settled it with ourselves that our higher consciousness gives us touch of the reality of the Divine and everlasting, when it declares that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ. This we believe to be the last word for us on the mystery of our being and destiny.

J. PERCIVAL, *Oxford Review and Undergraduates' Journal*, Jan. 25th, 1883.

THE first time the relationship of brotherhood is brought before us in Scripture does not present it in the most harmonious or endearing aspect, and yet the very rivalry and resentment which were engendered by it give an incidental sign of the closeness of the tie which it involves.

I. The brother tie is one whose visible and apparent closeness of necessity diminishes under the common conditions of life.

II. Although it is a link whose visible association vanishes, it ought never to be an association which fades out of the heart. There is always something wrong when a relationship like this disappears behind maturer attachments.

III. Whether from the hearth of home or from the wider range of brotherhood which the commonwealth supplies, the pattern and inspiration of true brotherhood is found in Christ, the Elder Brother of us all.

A. MURSELL, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 251.

"AM I my brother's keeper?" This is the very gospel of selfishness, and a murderer is its first preacher. The gospel of selfishness is, that a man must take care of his own interests; and out of that universal self-seeking, provided it be wise and restrained, will come the well-being of all.

I. This is an age of rights rather than of duties. It is very notable that there is almost nothing about rights in the teaching of Christ. The Lord seeks to train the spirit of His followers into doing and suffering aright. But by preaching love and duty, the Gospel has been the lawgiver of nations, the friend of man, the champion of his rights. Its teaching has been of God, of duty, and of love; and wherever these ideas have come, freedom and earthly happiness and cultivation have followed silently behind.

II. Our age needs to be reminded that in one sense each of us has the keeping of his brethren confided to him, and that love is the law and the fulfilling of the law. The rights of men to our love, to our consideration, rest upon an act of Divine love. Their chartered right to our reverence is in these terms: That God loved them and sent His Son to be the propitiation for their sins, and the Saviour set to it His seal and signed it with His blood.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Life in the Light of God's Word*, p. 301.

REFERENCES: iv. 9.—J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, p. 186; H. Alford, *Sermons*, p. 1; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 277; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 242; A. Hamilton, *Sunday Magazine* (1877), p. 660; J. D. Kelly, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 243; T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 5; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1399; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 272; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 25, No. 39. iv. 9, 10.—H. Melvill, *Sermons on Less Prominent Facts*, p. 286. iv. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 461, and vol. xii., No. 708. iv. 13.—Parker, vol. i., p. 150. iv. 15, 16.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., pp. 86 and 108. iv. 17.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 268 iv. 23, 24.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Notebook*, p. 19; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 380; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 227.

Chap. iv., ver. 26.—"Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

PRAYER is speaking to God—on any subject, with any object, in any place, and in any way.

I. Prayer so regarded is an instinct. It seems to be natural to man to look upwards and address himself to his God. Even in the depth of lost knowledge and depraved feeling, the instinct of prayer will assert itself. A nation going to war with another nation will call upon its God for success and victory; and an individual man, from the bedside of a dying wife or child, will invoke the aid of one supposed to be mighty, to stay the course of a disease which the earthly physician has pronounced incurable and mortal. Just as the instinct of nature brings the child in distress or hunger to a father's knee or to a mother's bosom,

even so does created man turn in great misery to a faithful Creator, and throw himself upon His compassion and invoke His aid.

II. But prayer is a mystery too. The mysteriousness of prayer is an argument for its reasonableness. It is not a thing which common men would have thought of or gone after for themselves. The idea of holding a communication with a distant, an unseen, a spiritual being, is an idea too sublime, too ethereal for any but poets or philosophers to have dreamed of, had it not been made instinctive by the original Designer of our spiritual frame.

III. Prayer is also a revelation. Many things waited for the coming of Christ to reveal them, but prayer waited not. Piety without knowledge there might be; piety without prayer could not be. And so Christ had no need to teach as a novelty the duty or the privilege of prayer. He was able to assume that all pious men, however ignorant, prayed; and to say therefore only this,—"When ye pray, say after this manner."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Voices of the Prophets*, p. 139.

REFERENCES: iv. 26.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 230; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 331; B. Waugh, *The Sunday Magazine* (1887), p. 491; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 381.

Genesis iv.

I.

FROM the story of Cain we gather the following thoughts:—

I. Eve's disappointment at the birth of Cain should be a warning to all mothers. Over-estimate of children may be traced sometimes to extreme love for *them*; it may also arise on the part of parents from an overweening estimate of *themselves*.

II. We see next in the history of Cain what a fearful sin that of murder is. The real evil of murder (apart from its theftuous character) lies in the principles and feelings from which it springs, and in its recklessness as to the consequences, especially the future and everlasting consequences, of the act. The red flower of murder is comparatively rare, but its seeds are around us on all sides.

III. No argument can be deduced from the history of Cain in favour of capital punishments. We object to such

punishments: (1) because they, like murder, are opposed to the spirit of forgiveness manifested in the Gospel of Christ; (2) because, like murder, they ruthlessly disregard consequences.

II.

I. It is singular how mental effort and invention seem chiefly confined to the race of Cain. Feeling themselves estranged from God, they are stung to derive whatever solace they can from natural research, artistic skill, and poetic illusion. It is melancholy to think that so many of the arts appeared in conjunction with some shape or other of evil. The music of Jubal in all probability first sounded in the praise of some idol god, or perhaps mingled with some infernal sacrifice. The art of metallurgy and its cognate branches became instantly the instruments of human ferocity and the desire of shedding blood. Even poetry first appeared on the stage linked with the immoral and degrading practice of polygamy. Gifts without graces are but lamps enabling individuals and nations to see their way down more clearly to the chambers of death.

II. There are certain striking analogies between our own age and the age before the flood. Both are ages of (1) ingenuity; (2) violence; (3) great corruption and sensuality; (4) both ages are distinguished by the striving of the Spirit of God.

G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 151.

References: iv.—Parker, vol. i., p. 145; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 336; S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 45. iv.—ix. 17.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 116.

Chap. v., ver. 2.—"Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

I. No sooner was Adam made, than it was at once resolved that he should not be alone; and God proceeded to create Eve. So even in heaven Christ's happiness was not complete without His Church. He came that His yearning heart might have a people to be His own.

II. As Eve was brought to Adam, so the Church was brought to Christ.

III. As from that moment Adam and Eve were treated as one, so in everything Christ's people are one with their Lord.

IV. In the dignity and happiness of Adam and Eve we see a type of Christ and the Church, the Church as it is now, but much rather as it will be at last.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 116.

REFERENCES: v. 2.—J. Laidlaw, *Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 98. v. 3.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 382; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 193. v. 4.—B. Waugh, *Sunday Magazine* (1887), pp. 423, 425. v. 5.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 156

Chap. v., vers. 21-24.—"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah, etc."

IN the Bible, besides its ordinary characters, and besides its simply extraordinary men such as David, Solomon, or Isaiah, there is another and a still more interesting order, around whom hovers a shade of supernaturalism and mystery. Such are Melchisedec, Elijah, Moses, and Enoch.

I. Consider the life of Enoch. He "walked with God." These words seem to imply that Enoch possessed a remarkable resemblance to God in moral excellence; that he realised God's presence, and enjoyed His communion in an extraordinary measure, and that he publicly avowed himself to be on God's side, and stood almost alone in doing so.

We notice especially the quietness and unconsciousness of his walk with God. The life of David or of Job resembled a stormy spring day, made up of sweeping tempest, angry glooms, and sudden bursts of windy sunshine; that of Enoch is a soft grey autumn noon, with one mild haze of brightness covering earth and heaven.

II. Notice Enoch's public work of protest and prophecy. The Epistle of Jude supplies us with new information about Enoch's public work. It was not simply his walk, but his work, that was honoured by translation. He not only characterised and by implication condemned his age, but predicted the coming of the last great Judgment of God. He announced it (1) as a glorious and overpowering event; (2) as one of conclusive judgment and convincing demonstration.

III. Look now at Enoch's translation. How striking in its simplicity is the phrase "He was not, for God took him!" The circumstances of his translation are advisedly concealed: "translated that he should not see death." Many a hero has gathered fame because he stood "face to face with death," and has outfaced the old enemy; but death never so much as dared to "look into Enoch's eye as it kindled into immortality." The reasons why this honour was conferred on him were probably

(1) To show his transcendent excellence; (2) To abash an infidel world; (3) To prove that there was another state of being, and to give a pledge of this to all future ages.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 217.

REFERENCES: v. 21-24.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 321; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1307; *Congregationalist*, vol. xii., p. 561.

Chap. v., vers. 23, 24, and Heb. xi. 5.

WE are told that Enoch "pleased God," not by any special superhuman experiences and endeavours, but just in such a way as we may all imitate. Consider—

I. The necessity for pleasing God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews God is spoken of as "Him with whom we have to do." We have little to do with each other compared with what we have to do with Him. If God is not pleased with us, we cannot be right.

II. The method of pleasing God. To describe this would be to describe the whole Christian life. The way to all goodness and to the pleasing of God is the old way of repentance, faith and obedience to Christ.

III. The results of pleasing God will be manifold and very good. (1) We shall in this way please ourselves better than in any other. (2) If we please God, we shall have pleasure in life and the world. (3) Whatever may come in this life, one thing is always sure: "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 408.

REFERENCES: v. 23, 24.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 16; Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, pp. 438, 471.

Chap. v., ver. 24.—"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

FEW words are needed to describe the salient features of the majority of human lives. It is not needful to write a volume to tell whether a man has spent a noble or a wasted life. One stroke of the pen, one solitary word, may be enough.

I. Here is a life suddenly and prematurely cut short; for although Enoch lived 365 years, it was not half the usual age of the men of his day.

II. Enoch's was a life spent amid surrounding wickedness.

III. It was a life spent in fellowship with God. This expression "walked with God" has a very peculiar force. There is in it the idea of strong persistence and determination. There is also the idea of progress.

IV. Enoch's was a life of noble testimony.

V. Enoch's was a life crowned by translation. His translation was (1) A reminder to the men of his day that there was another state above and beyond the present; (2) An intimation of the final reward of the saints. The eternal life which was given to him will be granted, sooner or later, to every child of God.

J. W. ATKINSON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 908.

REFERENCES: v. 24.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 382; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 332; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 5. v. 27.—Parker, vol. i., p. 362, and *Hidden Springs*, p. 358.

Chap. v., ver. 29.—"This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands."

THESE words, used by Lamech, apply far more truly to the descendant of Noah after the flesh, even Jesus Christ.

I. When our Lord appeared among men, the world was in almost as sad and hopeless a condition as when Lamech looked around him. Among the Gentiles there was ignorance, darkness, and false imaginations, among the chosen people there was hardness and impenitence. Christ comforted His disciples after His resurrection by raising up the temple of their wrecked faith, as He raised again the temple of His own body. He comforted them with the assurance that their faith was not in vain, that He had the keys of death and hell, and was able to succour to the uttermost those who trusted in Him.

II. The risen Christ comforted also the fathers of the ancient covenant. Moses and Elias appeared unto Him on Tabor, speaking with Him of the things concerning His passion. The ancient patriarchs could not enter into heaven till the gates were opened by the cross of Christ, and the handwriting that was against all sinners was taken away.

III. The Resurrection of Christ is a joy and comfort to us also: (1) because in Him a way of safety was opened to the world; (2) because He will repay a hundredfold all that is done for Him.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 217.

THIS passage teaches us: I. The hardness and difficulty of life. These words are the words of parents. Lamech, "the powerful," is not ashamed to confess that he needs comfort; and when this child comes to him he accepts him as a Divine gift, as a commissioned, competent, and thrice-welcome messenger of comfort from God.

II. The comfort that comes into the world with children. These words of Lamech are the permanent inscription in the horoscope which parents everywhere and always see over the cradle of the latest born. There is a bright prophecy of God concerning the future in this invincible hopefulness of the parental heart.

III. The security we have for this in the great fact of our redemption. Our Noah has been born: the Rest-giver, strong Burden-bearer, all-pitying and all-suffering Saviour. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but Jesus Christ brings and gives righteousness, instilling it into every believing heart. Noah was a preserver of the world in his own family from a temporary flood, Jesus Christ makes this world itself the Ark which He commands, steering it through this great and wide sea of space and time in safety.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 1 (also *Sunday Magazine*, 1877, p. 586).

REFERENCES: v.—Parker, vol. i., p. 154; *Expositor*, 1st series vol. viii., p. 449, vol. xi., p. 213.

Chap. vi., ver. 3.—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

I. WHAT is implied in the assertion, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man?" It is implied: (1) that the Spirit does sometimes strive with men; (2) that men resist the Spirit.

II. What is not intended by the Spirit striving? It is no form of physical struggling or effort whatever. It is not any force applied to our bodies.

III. What, then, is the striving of the Spirit? It is an energy of God applied to the mind of man, setting truth before his mind, reasoning, convincing, and persuading.

IV. How may it be known when the Spirit of God strives with an individual? (1) When a man finds his attention arrested to the great concerns of his soul; (2) when a man finds himself convinced of sin; (3) when the mind is convicted of the great guilt and ill-desert of sin; (4) when men see the folly of seeking salvation in any other way than through Christ alone.

V. What is intended by the Spirit's not striving always? Not that He will at some period withdraw from among mankind, but that He will withdraw from the individual in question. There is a limit to the Spirit's efforts in the case of each sinner; at some uncertain, awful point he will reach and pass it.

VI. Why will God's Spirit not strive always? (1) Because

longer striving will do the sinner no good; (2) because sinners sin wilfully when they resist the Holy Ghost; (3) because there is a point beyond which forbearance is no virtue.

VII. Consequences of the Spirit's ceasing to strive with men: (1) a confirmed hardness of heart; (2) a seared conscience; (3) certain damnation.

C. G. FINNEY, *Sermons on Gospel Themes*, p. 264.

GOD strives with man in many ways by the working of His blessed Spirit within him: by the working of our own conscience, by various warnings from without, constantly strewn in our paths; but if we grieve and resist the Holy Spirit of God, then He will not always strive with us, but will give us over to a reprobate mind.

I. Consider the great mercy of God in consenting to strive with man at all.

II. The striving of the Spirit is a means of resisting the flesh.

III. The Spirit of God strives in many ways. His strivings have a meaning, a message, and a warning to us all.

BISHOP ATLAY, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 556.

REFERENCES: vi. 2.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 149. vi. 3.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 362; J. Wells, *Bible Echoes*, p. 217; J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 328; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 101; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 43, and vol. xvi., p. 22. vi. 5.—J. Laidlaw, *Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 138.

Chap. vi. vers. 5, 6, 7.—"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, etc."

I. "IN these verses," it will be said, "we see the results of the fall. God made man innocent, and man fell when he lost this independent virtue, this innocency of his own; as the first father lost it, all his descendants, by the decree of God or by some necessity of their relationship, lost it too; hence arose the need for Divine grace, and for men being made partakers of a righteouness which is not their own."

Now, if we follow the Scripture narrative closely, we shall find that it directly negatives this statement. It tells us that God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." Such words absolutely exclude the idea that man, according to his original constitution, possessed anything of his own. They affirm him to be good only in so far as he reflects that which exists perfect in another, so far only as he confesses Him to be the Good. God pronounced His creation

very good, because no creature was standing in itself—because the highest creature, to which all the others looked up, himself looked up to his Maker and saw his perfection in Him.

II. The principle that man was made in the image of God is not a principle which was true for Adam and false for us. It is the principle upon which the race was constituted and can never cease to be constituted. Adam's sin consisted in disbelieving that law and acting as if he were not under it. The Divine order has not been interrupted because a man refused obedience to it; it is only made more evident by that violation. Man has set up a self-will, has fallen under the dominion of the nature which God had given him. This very act is a step in his education, a means by which God will teach him more fully what he is, what he is not; how he may thwart the purposes of his Creator, how he may conspire with them.

III. The story of the flood, as told in Scripture, is a most memorable part of the history of man, expounding the course of God's dealings with him. He is grieved that He made man, because men were living wholly at variance with the law under which they were created. He uses the powers of nature to destroy those who had made themselves the slaves of nature. The righteous government which physical things obey is thus indicated. God's repentance is reconciled with His divine, unchangeable will. There is a true and holy repentance in God, otherwise there could be no repentance in us.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 50.

REFERENCES: vi. 6.—*Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i. (1887), p. 235. vi. 7.—Parker, vol. i., p. 164. vi. 6-8.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 334. vi. 8.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 108.

Chap. vi., ver. 9.—"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

I. NOAH, we read, "was a just man and perfect in his generations"; and why? (1) Because he was a faithful man—faithful to God, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Noah and Abraham believed God, and so became heirs of the righteousness which is by faith; not their own righteousness, not growing out of their own character, but given them by God, who puts His righteous Spirit into those who trust in Him. (2) Noah was perfect in all the relations and duties of life—a good son, a good husband, a good father: these were

the fruits of his faith. He believed that the unseen God had given him these ties, had given him his parents and his children, and that to love them was to love God, to do his duty to them was to do his duty to God.

II. The Bible gives us a picture of the old world before the flood—a world of men mighty in body and mind, fierce and busy, conquering the world round them, in continual war and turmoil; with all the wild passions of youth, and yet all the cunning and experience of enormous old age; every one guided only by self-will, having cast off God and conscience, and doing every man that which was right in the sight of his own eyes. And amidst all this Noah was steadfast; he at least knew his way; he "walked with God, a just man and perfect in his generations."

III. There was something wonderful and divine in Noah's patience. He knew that a flood was to come; he set to work in faith to build his ark, and that ark was in building for one hundred and twenty years. During all that time Noah never lost faith, and he never lost love either, for we read that he preached righteousness to the very men who mocked him, and preached in vain. One hundred and twenty years he warned those sinners of God's wrath, of righteousness and judgment to come, and no man listened to him. That must have been the hardest of his trials.

C. KINGSLEY, *Village Sermons*, p. 74.

REFERENCES: vi. 9.—R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 127; E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 234.

Chap. vi., ver. 12 (with Luke xvii. 26, 27).—**"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."**

I. THE statement in Genesis of the corruption of the world before the flood is expressed in very strong language: "The wickedness of man was great in the earth." Only one particular feature of this general corruption is given: "that the earth was filled with violence." Yet this is mentioned as forming rather a part of the general corruption than as being the whole of it. Another, and as it may seem, a more prevailing part, is given by our Lord: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage."

Our Lord here names not occasional crimes which disturb society, but society's most ordinary and most necessary practices; things which are neither crimes nor sins in themselves; things

which men may do and must do. He means us to understand that there is a natural danger in the things of which He was speaking, which, if left to itself and not earnestly struggled against, would certainly lead to the following judgment.

II. The great truth is, that no one, old or young, can save his soul by following the course of life quietly and letting it drift him whither it will. It is not in our life here, as we now live, with all its wisdom and all its labour and all its pleasures, to attain to life eternal. Round the tree of life there is a fiery guard, which allows not fallen man in his own natural course to reach unto it. It is not like a tree standing by the wayside, so that we have only to put forth our hand as we go by, and eat and live for ever. Christ came to take us out of our common nature, to tear us away from the path which we were naturally treading; to give us another nature not our own, to set us in a new way, of which the end is not death but life.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 82.

REFERENCE: vi. 13.—Parker, vol. i., p. 159.

Chap. vi., ver. 16.—"A window shalt thou make to the ark."

I. WHEN Noah was building his ark, God gave him a command, "A window shalt thou make to the ark," and this window was to be made in the roof. Its purpose was (1) to let in the light and air; (2) that Noah might look out of it, sometimes, to heaven. He could see nothing of earth through it, only heaven. Sometimes he may have felt inclined to doubt during the forty days of rain; but at that window he lifted his face to the light and held communion with God.

II. We have got a voyage over the water-flood also. We have to pass through many storms and troubles. These will swallow us up, unless we systematically keep a window in the roof open, and go to it, to look through it to God. When Daniel was in the land of captivity, he opened his window seven times a day towards Jerusalem, and prayed to God through it. Our Jerusalem is above—the heavenly Jerusalem; and we must, like him, turn our faces thither and pray.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 159.

REFERENCES: vi. 22.—M. G. Pearse, *Sermons for Children*, p. 34; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 383; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 79.

Chap. vii., ver. 1.—"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

I. The first fact that strikes us in the story of the flood is this: that God, on account of the wickedness to which the world had grown, had made up His mind to sweep it away, once and for all.

II. Out of the seed of Noah God had determined to people the earth once more with a race that would not be so wicked as the one He destroyed.

III. Noah was told to go into the ark because his life was to be saved from the flood. God has provided another ark for us; He tells us to go into it and be saved.

IV. Noah's family was taken with him into the ark, showing the value God sets on family life.

V. God gave it as a reward to Noah for his righteousness that his children went with him into the ark. A holy and loving example preaches a sermon to those who watch it, and remains in the memory of the godless son and the godless daughter long after the parents have been laid in the grave.

Bishop Thorold, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 17.

References: vii. 1.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 171; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 118; *The Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i. (1887), p. 84; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 17. vii. 1-7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1336. vii. 1, etc.—J. Cumming, *Church Before the Flood*, pp. 307, 333. vii. 8, 9.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 26. vii. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1613; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 157; B. Isaac, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 425. vii. 19, 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 240.

Gen. vi. and vii.

A long period elapsed between the commencement of the building of the ark and the actual flood. During that period we notice: (1) the strength of Noah's faith. God has told him of a deluge of which there is no appearance; he has commanded him to build a strange vessel for no apparent purpose; he has told him that one hundred and twenty years of toil must elapse before the vessel can be of any use to him. And yet, in the face of all these difficulties, Noah forms and keeps his resolution to obey God. (2) Notice the reception which Noah's work and message probably met with. The first feeling excited would be one of derision and mirth, then would come wonder, then pity, then disappointment and disgust, and lastly, perhaps, a silent contempt.

I. The flood shows us: (1) how absolute is God's control

over the natural world; (2) it illustrates the evils of sin and the light in which it appears to the eye of God; (3) it reminds us of another deluge, of which all unreconciled sinners stand in jeopardy. No dove wings its way across that deluge; no mountains lift their tops through its departing billows. From this deluge let us all flee. Christ's ark still waits for us; His door stands open, and His voice says, "Turn ye to your strongholds, ye prisoners of hope."

II. Consider the various purposes that were served by the deluge: (1) it swept away an effete and evil generation, which had become of no use, except to commit sin and thus deprave and weaken the general stock of humanity; (2) the flood was calculated to overawe mankind, and to suggest the idea that other such interpositions might be expected when they were required; (3) the flood furnished an opportunity to God of coming more nearly and closely to men; (4) the flood brought the human family nearer to the promised land of Canaan.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 241.

REFERENCES: vi.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 223. vi. and vii. —S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 65.

Chap. viii., ver. 4.—**"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat."**

THE history of the deluge is alleged in the New Testament as a type of the deep waters of sin, in which a lost world is perishing, and from which there is no escape but in that ark which God hath prepared for us. The eight souls saved from the deluge are types of that little flock which rides safely and triumphantly, though the floods lift up their waves and the billows break over them. And their safety is assured to them, because they are in Christ.

I. At the root of all Christianity lies that deep mysterious truth, the spiritual union of the Redeemer with those whom He redeemed. To this truth most emphatically witnesses all the New Testament teaching about the ark as a symbol and a prophecy. For (1) The ark is a figure of Christ. The ark floated over the waste of waters as Christ dwelt and toiled and suffered in the wilderness of this world and amid the waters of affliction. (2) The ark is a figure of the redeemed of Christ. The Church, which is Christ's body, is also the ark of refuge from the wrath of God. This life is still to the Church a conflict, a trial, a pilgrimage, a voyage. The crown shall be at the resurrection of the just.

II. The practical thoughts to which this subject leads us differ but little from the doctrinal. Is not the substance and the end of all—safety in Christ, rest in Christ, and at last glory in Christ? Those only who have rested in the Ark will rest upon Mount Ararat. The life of the Christian is begun on earth; it is perfected in heaven. When the voyage is over, the Saviour, who has been to us the Ark upon the waters, shall be to us, in the eternal mountains of the Lord, rest and peace and light and glory.

BISHOP H. BROWNE, *Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge*, p. 67.

Chap. viii., vers. 4, 18, 20.

ON the slopes of Ararat was the second cradle of the race, the first village reared in a world of unseen graves.

I. It was the village of the ark, a building fashioned and fabricated from the forests of a drowned and buried world. To the world's first fathers it must have seemed a hallowed and venerable form.

II. The village of the ark was the village of sacrifice. They built a sacrificial altar in which fear raised the stones, tradition furnished the sacrifice, and faith kindled the flame.

III. The first village was the village of the rainbow. It had been seen before in the old world, but now it was seen as a sign of God's mercy, His covenant in creation.

IV. The village of the ark gives us our first code of laws. As man first steps forth with the shadows of the fall around him, scarce a principle seems to mark the presence of law. Here we advance quite another stage, to a new world; the principles of law are not many, but they have multiplied. As sins grow, laws grow. Around the first village pealed remote mutterings of storms to come.

V. The village of the ark was the village of sin. Even to Noah, the most righteous of men, sin came out of the simple pursuit of husbandry. A great, good man, the survivor of a lost world, the stem and inheritor of a new, he came to the moment in life of dreadful overcoming.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *The Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 92.

REFERENCES: viii. 4, 18, 19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 408 viii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 637. viii. 11.—T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 158; H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 1. viii. 13-16.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 160.

Chap. viii., vers. 20, 22.—"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar, etc."

Noah, we are told, "was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Noah reverenced right and justice; he ordered his family well; he lived in the presence of an unseen Being, who is right and true, and who had appointed him to be the head of a family. By the orderliness and quietness of his life he became a witness against the turbulent, self-willed world, in the midst of which he was dwelling. But there is in him also an earnest interest in his fellow-men. He separates from them only that he may be a witness to them of the good that they are flying from, and which he claims for himself and his family because he believes that God designs it for the creatures He has formed.

I. There is an evident difference between the sacrifice of Noah and those of Cain and Abel. Here, under God's guidance, the mound of turf gives place to the altar which is built. An order is discovered in the dignity of the inferior creatures; the worthiest are selected for an oblation to God; the fire which consumes, the flame which ascends, are used to express the intention of him who presents the victim.

II. We must feel that there was an inward progress in the heart of the man corresponding to this progress in his method of uttering his submission and his aspirations. Noah must have felt that he was representing all human beings; that he was not speaking what was in himself so much as offering the homage of the restored universe.

III. The foundation of sacrifice is laid in the fixed will of God; in His fixed purpose to assert righteousness; in the wisdom which adapts its means to the condition of the creature for whose sake they are used. The sacrifice assumes eternal right to be in the Ruler of the universe, all the caprice to have come from man, from his struggle to be an independent being, from his habit of distrust. When trust is restored by the discovery that God means all for his good, then he brings the sacrifice as a token of his surrender.

F. D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures*, p. 18.

The text teaches:—I. That worship should succeed every act of Divine deliverance.

II. That sacrifice is the only medium through which accept-

able service can be rendered. Noah's sacrifice expressed: (1) a feeling of supreme thankfulness: (2) a feeling of personal guilt.

III. That no act of worship escapes Divine notice.

IV. That human intercession vitally affects the interests of the race.

PARKER, *The Cavendish Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 61.

REFERENCES: viii. 20.—J. Cumming, *Church Before the Flood*, p. 359. viii. 20-22.—G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons*, p. 280.

Chap. viii., ver. 21.—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

THESE words were said by our Maker more than four thousand years ago, and they have been true ever since, down to this very hour. There is so much more bad than good in us that we should certainly go wrong if left to ourselves, and the bias of our nature to evil is so strong that it can only be corrected by changing the very nature itself; or, in the words of Scripture, by being born again of the Spirit. Everything is properly called good or evil according as it answers or defeats the purpose for which it was made. We were made for our Maker's glory, after His own image, that we should make His will the rule of our lives, and His love and anger the great objects of our hope and fear; that we should live in Him and for Him and to Him, as our constant Guide and Master and Father. If we answer these ends, then we are good creatures; if we do not, we are bad creatures; nor does it matter how many good or amiable qualities we may possess, like the blossoms or leaves of a barren fruit-tree, we are bad of our kind if we do not bring forth fruit.

II. Now, instead of living to God, we by nature care nothing about God; we live as if we had made ourselves, not as if God had made us. This is the corruption of our nature, which makes us evil in the sight of God. Christ alone can make us sound from head to foot. He alone can give us a new and healthy nature; He alone can teach us so to live as to make this world a school for heaven. All that is wanted is that we should see our need of Him and fly to Him for aid.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 19.

REFERENCES: viii. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 616; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 24.

Chap. viii., ver. 22.—"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

I. EVERY harvest teaches the fact of God's wise providence.

II. Every harvest teaches the fact of God's definite purpose One vast magnificent purpose has kept everything in exact order during all these years of Divine fidelity.

III. God expects every one of His creatures to be as faithful to a purpose as He Himself has been.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 258.

"While the earth remaineth . . . winter . . . shall not cease."

I SPIRITUAL winter is an ordination of God. The true spiritual analogue of winter is not spiritual death, not even feeble spiritual life. There is an orderly change in the soul. Unseen, yet very really, God's Spirit is at work, altering influences, changing modes. He introduces a new state of spiritual experiences, seeking to accomplish varied objects, and summoning to new modes of improving His presence.

II. The objects of spiritual winter are: (1) to confirm and strengthen faith; (2) to act as a check upon excesses; (3) to help in the training of the Christian character and the Christian Church.

III. How are we to improve spiritual winter? (1) By learning a lesson of mutual Christian tolerance. (2) By treasuring up the clear vision and calm judgment which the winter of the soul is fitted to impart, for the improvement of the season when fervour shall be renewed and emotion once more excited.

A. MACKENNAL, *Christ's Healing Touch*, p. 101.

REFERENCES: viii. 22.—R. W. Church, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 369 (see also *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 7); J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 53; R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 127; J. Tulloch, *Sundays at Balmoral*, p. 55; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 2nd series, p. 94; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1891. ix. 1-7.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 140.

Chap. ix., ver. 3.—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

How are we to use the creation of God so that it may help towards our own supreme object? (1) We can *study* created things; we can see God Himself through them. (2) We may *use* God's creation for our necessity, for our advantage, and for our delight. (3) We are to *abstain* from it in obedience to temperance and to the rules of discipline. Of these three ways of using the creation, the first is the most noble; the second

is the most common; the third is the most necessary. To some the means of serving God have grown so all-important that they have forgotten altogether that it was to serve God that they set out. The source of error lies in placing the means before us, as if they were the end, and leaving out the thought of the end in our lives and conversation. When we go wrong in our work or our leisure, our words or our silence, we do it because we forget the end of everything; because we dethrone from its rightful, its eternal seat, the strong, the bright, the radiant remembrance that we are of God, that we are in God, and that we are on our way to God.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 26.

REFERENCES: ix. 1-20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 82. ix. 5, 6.—G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 320.

Chap. ix., vers. 8, 9.—"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."

To understand this covenant, consider what thoughts would have been likely to grow up in the minds of Noah's children after the flood. Would they not have been something of this kind? "God does not love men. He has drowned all but us, and we are men of like passions with the world that perished; may we not expect the like ruin at any moment? Then what use to plough and sow, and build and plant, and work for those who shall come after us? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

I. The covenant God made with Noah was intended to remedy every one of the temptations into which Noah's children's children would have been certain to fall, and into which so many of them did fall. They might have become reckless from fear of a flood at any moment. God promises them, and confirms it with the sign of the rainbow, never again to destroy the earth by water. They would have been likely to take to praying to the rain and thunder, the sun and the stars. God declares in this covenant that it is He alone who sends the rain and thunder, that He brings the clouds over the earth, that He rules the great awful world; that men are to look up and believe in God as a loving and thinking Person, who has a will of His own, and that a faithful and true and loving and merciful will; that their lives and safety depend not on blind chance or the stern necessity of certain laws of nature, but on the covenant of an almighty and all-loving Person.

II. This covenant tells us that we are made in God's likeness,

and therefore that all sin is unworthy of us and unnatural to us. It tells us that God means us bravely and industriously to subdue the earth and the living things upon it; that we are to be the masters of the pleasant things about us, and not their slaves, as sots and idlers are; that we are stewards or tenants of this world for the great God who made it, to whom we are to look up in confidence for help and protection.

C. KINGSLEY, *Village Sermons*, p. 82.

REFERENCES: ix. 8-17.—R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol i., p. 151. ix. 11.—Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 163. ix. 11-17.—J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, p. 388.

Chap. ix., vers. 12-15.—**"And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations, etc."**

I. AMONG the many deep truths which the early chapters of Genesis enforce, there is none which strikes the thoughtful inquirer more forcibly than the connection between the disorder occasioned by man's sin and the remedy ordained by the wisdom and mercy of God. This connection may be traced in a very remarkable manner in the appointment of the rainbow as a sign and pledge of the covenant.

II. Not only is the rainbow, as an offspring equally of storm and sunshine, a fitting emblem of the covenant of grace; it is also a type of the equally distinctive peculiarity of Christ's Gospel—that sorrow and suffering have their appointed sphere of exercise, both generally in the providential administration of the world and individually in the growth and development of personal holiness.

III. For the full comprehension of the bow we must turn to the New Testament. In the Person and work of the atoning Mediator we find the only solution of that marvellous combination of judgment and mercy which is the distinctive characteristic of the whole of the Divine economy.

IV. There is a necessary imperfection in all earthly types of heavenly things. In nature the continued appearance of the rainbow is dependent on the continued existence of the cloud. In heaven the rainbow will continue to point backward to man's fall, onward to the perpetuity of a covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. But the work of judgment will then be accomplished, and therefore the cloud will have no more place in heaven.

E. B. ELLIOTT, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 151 (also *Good Words*, 1876, p. 341).

REFERENCE: ix. 12-16.—S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 27.

Chap. ix., ver. 13.—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."

I. God sent a flood on the earth; God set the rainbow in the cloud for a token. The important thing is to know that the flood did not come of itself, that the rainbow did not come of itself, and therefore that no flood comes of itself, no rainbow comes of itself, but all comes straight and immediately from one living Lord God. The flood and the rainbow were sent for a moral purpose: to punish sinners; to preserve the righteous; to teach Noah and his children after him a moral lesson concerning righteousness and sin, concerning the wrath of God against sin,—concerning God, that He governs the world and all in it, and does not leave the world or mankind to go on of themselves and by themselves.

II. The flood and the rainbow tell us that it is God's will to love, to bless, to make His creatures happy, if they will allow Him. They tell us that His anger is not a capricious, revengeful, proud, selfish anger, such as that of the heathen gods; but that it is an orderly anger, and therefore an anger which in its wrath can remember mercy. Out of God's wrath shines love, as the rainbow out of the storm. If it repenteth Him that He hath made man, it is only because man is spoiling and ruining himself, and wasting the gifts of the good world by his wickedness. If God sends a flood to destroy all living things, He will show, by putting the rainbow in the cloud, that floods and destruction and anger are not His rule; that His rule is sunshine and peace and order.

III. The Bible account of the flood will teach us how to look at the many accidents which still happen upon the earth. These disasters do not come of themselves, do not come by accident or chance or blind necessity; God sends them, and they fulfil His will and word. He may send them in anger, but in His anger He remembers mercy, and His very wrath to some is part and parcel of His love to the rest. Therefore these disasters must be meant to do good, and will do good, to mankind.

C. Kingsley, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 47.

I. Consider the record of the flood as a history: a history having a twofold aspect—an aspect of judgment, and an aspect of mercy. (1) "God," St. Peter says, "spared not the old world," He "brought in a flood upon the world of the ungodly." He who made can destroy. Long trifled with, God

is not mocked; and he who will not have Him for his Father must at last know Him as his Judge. (2) The record of judgment passes on into a record of mercy. Mercy was shown: (*a*) in preservation; (*b*) in reconstruction.

II. Consider the flood in its uses: as a type, as a prophecy, and as a warning. (1) The water through which Noah and his family passed into their ark was like the water of holy baptism, through which a Christian, penitent and believing, finds his way into the Church of the living God. (2) St. Peter exhibits the flood to us also as a prophecy. The flood of waters becomes in its turn the prediction of a last flood of fire. He who foretold the one—and notwithstanding long delay the word was fulfilled—may be believed when He threatens the other; and no pause or respite can defeat the certainty of the performance. (3) There is one special warning appended by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself to the Scriptural record of the great deluge: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Christ the Light of the World*, p. 133 (also *Good Words*, 1865, p. 520).

REFERENCES: ix. 13.—Parker, vol. i., p. 168; C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 423; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 97; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 241.

Chap. ix., ver. 14.—"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud."

How often after that terrible flood must Noah and his sons have felt anxious when a time of heavy rain set in, and the rivers Euphrates and Tigris rose over their banks and submerged the low level land! But if for a while their hearts misgave them, they had a cheering sign to reassure them, for in the heaviest purple storm-cloud stood the rainbow, recalling to their minds the promise of God.

I. If it be true that God's rainbow stands as a pledge to the earth that it shall never again be overwhelmed, is it not also true that He has set His bow in every cloud that rises and troubles man's mental sky? Beautiful prismatic colours in the rainbow that shines in every cloud—in the cloud of sorrow, in the cloud of spiritual famine, in the cloud of wrong-doing.

II. We are too apt in troubles to settle down into sullen despair, to look to the worst, instead of waiting for the bow. There are many strange-shaped clouds that rise above man's horizon and make his heavens black with wind and rain. But

each has its bow shining on it. Only wait, endure God's time, and the sun will look out on the rolling masses of vapour, on the rain, and paint thereon its token of God's love.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 28.

REFERENCES: ix. 14.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 227. ix. 15.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 228. ix. 15—xi. 26.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 138. ix. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 517; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 132. ix. 17.—J. A. Sellar, *Church Doctrine and Practice*, p. 297; H. Thompson, *Concionalia—Sermons for Parochial Use*, vol. i., p. 85. ix. 18-29.— R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 157. ix. 24-27. —J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, p. 412.

Chap. x., ver. 32.—"These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations, and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."

THIS is the summing up of the Scriptural account of the second spreading of the human race through the earth, after it had been laid bare by the Deluge, just as the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis give the history of the first increase from Adam and his sons. But there is this remarkable difference between the two: the first is manifestly a history of families; this is a history of nations.

I. Notice first the degree in which the original features of the founders of a race reproduce themselves in their descendants so as to become the distinct and manifest types of national life. The few words wherein, according to the wont of patriarchal times, Noah, as the firstborn priest of his own family, pronounces on his sons his blessing and his curse, sketch in outline the leading characteristics of all their after progeny.

II. We may observe also adumbrations of a mode of dealing with men which seems to imply that in His bestowal of spiritual gifts God deals with them after some similar law. We have seen this already in the descent of spiritual blessings along the line of the pious firstborn of Noah; and the same may be traced again: (1) in the blessing bestowed upon the race of Abraham; and (2) in the transference to the devouter Jacob and his seed of the blessing which was set at nought by the profane firstborn of Isaac.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 176.

REFERENCES: x.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 275, vol. vi., pp. 356, 357. x. 1-5.—Parker, vol. i., p. 172. x. 8-10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 31. x. 10, 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 317.

Chap. xi., ver. 1.—"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech."

THE New Testament is always converting into blessings the curses of the Old Testament. The burdens and severities of the Law are not only the types but the very substances of Gospel liberty and truth; the confusion of Babel leads to a greater harmony, and its dispersion ends in a more perfect union.

I. After the flood the whole earth was of one language and one speech. Now not even one country has one language within itself. No two persons that ever meet have it. The words may have the same spelling, but they do not carry to the hearer exactly the same sense in which they were spoken. There is not on this earth, in any fraction of it, one language and one speech; hence a great part of our sin and misery.

II. Even if there were a language perfectly the same, yet, until there was a setting to rights of disorders which have come into human thought, and until minds were themselves set in one accord, there could not be unity.

III. The men of the old world determined to do two things which real unity never does They resolved to make a great monument to their own glory, and they thought to frustrate a law of God and to break a positive rule of our being. Their unity was a false unity. They sought their own praise, and it ran contrary to the mind of God. Their profane unity was dashed into hundreds of divergent atoms, and was carried by the four winds to the four corners of the earth.

IV. What were the consequences of this scattering of the race? (1) It carried the knowledge of the true God and of the one faith into all the lands whither they went; (2) God replenished the whole surface of the globe by spreading men over it; (3) it was a plea for prayer, an argument for hope, a pledge of promise.

V. From that moment God has steadily carried on His design of restoring unity to the earth: His choosing of Abraham, His sending of Christ, the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, were all means to this very end.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 103.

Chap. xi., vers. 1-9.

FROM the text we gather these practical suggestions:—

I. Examine carefully the quality and meaning of every new plan of life.

II. Beware of the sophism that Heaven helps those who help themselves.

III. Regulate ambition by the Divine will.

IV. If we make great plans, let us make them in God's name and carry them out in God's strength.

V. Let us learn what is meant by all the unfinished towers that we see around us.

VI. Co-operation with God will alone secure the entire realisation of our plans.

Application: (1) We all have plans; (2) examine them; (3) remember the only foundation, on which alone men can build with safety.

PARKER, *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 181.

REFERENCES: xi. 1-9.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 232; Parker, vol. i., p. 176. xi. 1-10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 270.

Chap. xi., ver. 4 (with Acts ii. 3, 4).—"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, etc."

I. THREE motives may have led to the building of the Tower of Babel: (1) a feeling that in union and communion lay the secret of man's renown and strength—that to disperse the family was to debilitate it; (2) a remembrance of the deluge, and a guilty dread of some similar judgment, leading them to draw close to each other for support; (3) man was awaking to self-consciousness and a knowledge of his own resources. He was gaining a glimpse into the possible progress of civilisation. The tower was to be a focus where the rays of his power would be concentrated.

II. To all philanthropists this narrative preaches this simple and sublime truth—that genuine unity is not to be effectually compassed in any other manner than by striking at the original root of discord. Every scheme for the promotion of brotherhood which deals only with the external symptoms of disunion, and aims at correcting only what appears on the surface of society, is ultimately sure of frustration.

III. In His own good time and manner God realised the presumptuous design of the Babel-builders, and united in one central institution the scattered families of man. In the mediation of His Son He has reared up a Tower whose top reaches to heaven. It was in order to gather the nations into this world-embracing community that the apostles of Christ went forth charged with a message of peace and love. When the Spirit descended at Pentecost the physical impediment ob-

structing union—that difference of language which the sin of Babel had introduced—was removed. The apostles spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 361.

REFERENCES: xi. 4-9.—C. A. Fowler, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 137; J. Cumming, *Church before the Flood*, p. 499; S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 81.

Chap. xi., ver. 9.—"Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."

I. GOD is not the Author of confusion, but of peace. Yet once, in His wise compassion, He made confusion in order to prevent it; He destroyed peace, that in the end he might restore it.

The history of Babel is far more than a record of the defeated attempt of wicked men to accomplish an impossible folly. The building of that tower was the first great act of presumptuous rebellion against God subsequent to the flood, and therefore it was meet that a measure of vengeance should fall upon it such as, while the world stood, should never perish from the memory of mankind. And, as God so often orders, the crime of these men became their punishment. "Let us make a name," they cried, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." And this very thing it was which caused them to be scattered.

II. God, who hath made of one blood all nations of men, did, by that exercise of His power, the best thing that could be done to check and retard the rapid growth of evil, and to prepare the means by which man might be brought back to obedience. While there was but one tongue, men easily corrupted each other; when there were many, evil communications were greatly hindered. God marred the Babel-builders' work, but it was in order to mar their wickedness; and meanwhile He had His own gracious designs for a remedy. It was on the day of Pentecost that that remedy was first applied. Those cloven tongues of fire which, on that day, rested on the heads of the apostles, undid, to as great an extent as will be permitted in this world, the confusion of Babel.

F. E. PAGET, *Village Sermons* (*Advent to Whit-Sunday*), p. 223.

REFERENCES: xi. 9.—D. J. Vaughan, *The Days of the Son of Man*, p. 280; G. Huntington, *Sermons for the Church's Seasons* (*Advent to Trinity*), p. 276. xi. 27.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 181. xi. 27-32.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 281. xi. 27—xxv. 10.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 159. xi. 32.—H. Grey, *A Parting Memorial*, p. 232.

Chap. xii., vers. 1, etc.

I. In the call of Abram we see an outline of the great providential system under which we live.

II. Great lives are trained by great promises. The promise to Abram (1) throws light on the compensations of life; (2) it shows the oneness of God with His people; (3) it shows the influence of the present over the future.

III. There will always be central figures in society, men of commanding life, around whom other persons settle into secondary positions. This one man, Abram, holds the promise; all the other persons in the company hold it secondarily.

IV. Abram set up his altar along the line of his march.

V. The incident in vv. 10-12 shows what the best of men are when they betake themselves to their own devices. As the minister of God, Abram is great and noble; as the architect of his own fortune, he is cowardly, selfish, and false.

VI. (vv. 18-20). Natural nobleness ought never to be underrated. In this matter Pharaoh was a greater, a nobler man than Abram.

VII. The whole incident shows that God calls men to special destinies, and that life is true and excellent in itself and in its influences only in so far as it is divinely inspired and ruled.

PARKER, vol. i., p. 192.

Chap. xii., ver. 1.—"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

I. All the life of Abraham was a special training for a special end. Chosen, as are all God's instruments, because he was capable of being made that which the Lord purposed to make him, there was that in him which the good Spirit of the Lord formed, through the incidents of his life of wandering, into a character of eminent and single-hearted faithfulness.

II. This work was done not for his own sake exclusively. He was to be "a father of many generations." The seed of Abraham was to be kept separate from the heathen world around it, even until from it was produced the "Desire of all nations"; and this character of Abraham was stamped thus deeply upon him, that it might be handed on through him to his children and his children's children after him.

III. And so to a wonderful degree it was; marking that Jewish people, amongst all their sins and rebellions, with such a peculiar strength and nobleness of character; and coming out

in all its glory, in successive generations, in judge and seer and prophet and king, as they at all realised the pattern of their great progenitor, and walked the earth as strangers and pilgrims, but walked it with God, the God of Abraham and their God.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 165.

REFERENCES: xii. 1.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 337; J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, p. 1; Parker, vol. i., p. 186.

Chap. xii., vers. 1-3.: (with chap. ix., vers. 1-9).

No one has ever doubted that the words in Gen. ix. 1-7 are a Divine blessing upon the human race.

I. There is something especially appropriate in this language to the inhabitants of a restored earth. Compare it with the simple records of the garden life of Adam, and you perceive that you are entering upon a more advanced stage in human history. Two steps in advance have been taken: (1) Every man is now his brother's keeper. Every man is shedding his own blood when he sheds his brother's blood. The words "every man's brother" expanded the principle of the family to a higher power. They declared that the race was a family; they intimated that society was to be built up on the recognition of an actual relationship among the different members of it; (2) a higher dignity is put upon life than it had before, whether it dwells in a man or only in an inferior creature.

II. This is the first occasion on which we meet with the phrase "covenant." Man was a party to the covenant in the sense that he might believe or disbelieve the sign which was said to bear that Divine testimony. All his future acts would depend on this difference, because they would depend upon the question whether he worshipped a being in whom he trusted, or one whom he regarded as an enemy. Man lives by faith; and till faith is called forth in him he is still but an animal with the capacities of a spirit.

III. The history of Abram is the grand illustration of this truth. Every unfaithful man of the race of Abram, every unfaithful man anywhere, would be a god; he would not claim the right of knowing God and being like Him. Therefore all such were tempted to make gods of their own, and to forget the living God. Abram's faith consisted in not doing this—in acknowledging the Lord to be God. He believed God's promise. He counted it the highest blessing and glory, not that he should be blessed,

but that he should be the channel of blessing to multitudes unknown.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Law-Givers of the Old Testament*, p. 68.

REFERENCE: xii 1-3.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 394.

Chap. xii., vers. 1-4.

I. AT some time in our lives a call from God sends its trumpet tone through each of our souls, as it did when Abraham heard it, and he went forth with the future stretching broad and far before him.

II. God's call to Abraham was: (1) a call to closer communion with Himself; (2) a call which led him to break with his past; (3) a call into loneliness.

III. The reason why so many of us, who are good and honourable men, never become men of great use and example and higher thought and true devotion, is that we dare not be singular. We dare not leave our kindred or our set. We will not leave our traditional views and sentiments, and we cannot leave our secret sins. God speaks, and we close our eyes and turn away our heads, and our hearts answer, "I will not come." How long will all this last? Will it last until another solemn voice shall speak to us, and at the call of death we say, "I come"?

W. PAGE-ROBERTS, *Liberalism in Religion*, p. 178.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"And thou shalt be a blessing."

WHEN God called Abraham, and, in Abraham, the Jewish nation, He cradled them in blessings. This is the way in which He always begins with a man. If ever, to man or nation, He speaks otherwise, it is because they have made Him do so.

I. Many of us account religion rather as a possession to be held, or a privilege to be enjoyed, than as a life which we are to spread, a kingdom we are bound to extend. Consequently our religion has grown too passive. It would be healthier and happier if we were to cast into it more action.

II. Wherever Abraham went he shed blessings round him, not only by his prayers and influence, but by the actual charm of his presence. As Abraham was a blessing to the Jews, still more were the Jews a blessing to the world.

III. Then came the climax. He who so blesses with His blood, He who did nothing but bless, He was of the seed of Abraham.

IV. As joined to the mystical body of Christ, we are Abraham's

seed, and one of the promises to which we are admitted is this, "Thou shalt be a blessing." The sense of a positive appointment, of a destiny to do a thing, is the most powerful motive of which the human mind is capable. Whoever desires to be a blessing must be a man of faith, prayer, and love.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 293.

REFERENCES: xii. 2.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 113; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 205.

Chap. xii., ver. 3.—"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

I. A DOUBLE stream of narrative runs through the first four books of the Pentateuch. One of these may be called the Priestly narrative—the other, the Prophetical narrative. The text sets before us one of the characteristic features of the Prophetical narrative—that consciousness of the ideal destiny of Israel which developed afterwards into the definite hope commonly called Messianic. Unfettered by the political and material limitations of his age, the narrator discerns in dim outline the far-off goal of Israel's history, and enables his reader to discern it with him. We have first the familiar Protevangelion of the third chapter, where hope already steps in to alleviate the effects of the fall. Then comes the blessing given to Shem, and then the promise of our text.

II. What is the source of this conception of the ideal destiny of Israel which dominates so many points of the Old Testament? Israel was the people of Jehovah. They knew that the God of heaven and earth had really become their God, and had separated them to Himself as a peculiar people. Israel is the people of God: here is the fruitful germ of their whole future. The earliest records of the Old Testament are inspired by the consciousness of a noble ideal, which, so far from proving itself an illusion, was more or less completely realised. We may notice some of the more salient aspects of its development: (1) The establishment of the monarchy forms an epoch in Israelitish history. The monarchy created in Israel a sense of unity, and gave a new impulse to national feeling. (2) The great prophets amplify in different directions the thought of Israel's ideal future. (3) In the great prophecy of Israel's restoration, which occupies the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, we find the nation no longer viewed as an aggregate of isolated members, but grasped as a whole, dramatised as an individual, who stands before us realising in his own person his people's

purposes and aims. In his work as prophet he endures contumely and opposition, and though innocent himself, he sacrifices his life for others. Such is the personality upon whom, in the mind of Isaiah, the future alike of Israel and the world depends. In Christ as King and Christ as Prophet, the Founder and Head of a new social state, the hope of Israel, which but for His advent had been as an illusion or a dream, finds its consummation and its reward.

S. R. DRIVER, *Oxford University Herald*, Oct. 31st, 1885.

"All the families of the earth."

ST. PAUL finds the key to the constitution and the order of the human home in the spiritual sphere. Christian philosophy is inevitably transcendental—that is, it believes that earthly things are made after heavenly patterns, and that the "things seen and temporal" can only be fully understood by letting the light fall on them from the things which are not seen and eternal.

It was the redemption of the home when Christ's redeeming love to the world was made the pattern of its love. That home is the highest in which love reigns most perfectly.

I. The home is the instrument of a double education Its function is to develop the Divine image in parent and in child. The sentence on man after the fall was disciplinary, while on the tempter it was penal. The sentence on the tempter was utter and final degradation, while on man it was literally a sentence to a reformatory school. In sorrow, toil and tears, he was to learn how the devil had cheated him, in the hope that when he had learnt that lesson his heart might be open to the instruction of God once more.

II. As the first step to the fulfilment of his purpose in restoring man to his own image, God set "the solitary in families," He laid the foundation of the home as the fundamental human institution, the foundation of all true order, the spring of all true development in human society. Out of the home State and Church were to grow; by the home they were both to be established. And so God took the dual head of the first human home, the father and mother, and made them as gods to their children, and He set them there to study the pain and the burden of the godhead as well as the power and the joy. This was the only way by which man could gain the knowledge of the mind and heart of God.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 341.

From the text we learn three things: (1) there was to be a seed, a natural seed, including a spiritual seed, and this again including an individual seed. (2) The seed of Abraham is to have a relation to all the families of the earth. As Abraham was not a head of all mankind, like Adam or Noah, it was necessary to emphasize the universality of the blessing. (3) The benefit conveyed by the seed is here characterised by the word blessed. Blessing is like mercy in this: that it sums up in one word the whole salvation of which the Bible is the gospel. It involves redemption and regeneration, both of which are necessary to salvation.

J. G. Murphy, *The Book of Daniel*, p. 12.

Reference: xii. 3.—*Expositor*, 2nd Series, vol. viii., p. 200.

Chap. xii., vers. 4, 5 (with Acts xvi. 10).—"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; . . . and they went forth, to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

I. Taken together, these texts may be paraphrased geographically, by saying that they contain a direction to the Law and the Gospel to move westwards, like the sun. The forefather of the Jews was ordered to quit his home for a land that looked westwards; the Apostle of the Gentiles was ordered to commence travelling westwards, turning his back on the east. One text limited the earlier dispensation to a single branch of the Semitic race; the other threw open the later dispensation to all the families of the earth. As we cast our eyes upwards along the stream of time to the call of Abraham, we are met on all sides by decisive tokens of a world-wide purpose. Abraham was called 430 years before the law was given; but could any place have been selected more felicitously for its programme than the country to which Abraham moved? Palestine was, by desert, river, and mountain, as closed to the east as it lay open by sea to the west; and thus was as fitted for a nation that was to be kept separate for ages in utter exclusiveness and isolation, as it was also ready to become the starting-point at another time of a system with cosmopolitan aims, and designed especially to spread in the west. That system had hardly been inaugurated before it commenced moving of itself, slowly and majestically, to a destination traced for it by no human hand.

II. The inspired writers themselves never dreamt of the Gospel turning out, as it has done, an essential maritime power. Instead of the Gospel diverging eastwards to convert the east,

the east poured westwards in countless hosts after the Gospel. Nation after nation burst over Europe with the vehemence of a cyclone, and shattered in pieces the whole fabric of the Roman empire. All the new comers became followers of Christ. The most striking part of the Gospel programme is yet to come—namely, the conversion of the Jews. The Jews have been compelled to wait as long for their conversion as the Gentiles did for their call; yet both events were foretold with the same clearness at the beginning of each dispensation. The conversion of the Jews, whenever it occurs, will be like the transformation scene of the old English play, a scene of overpowering brilliancy, the beginning of the end.

E. S. FFOULKES, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Oct. 26th, 1876.

REFERENCE: xii. 4.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 89.

Chap. xii., ver. 5.—"They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

THIS is one of the most comforting verses in the Bible. It is so simple and yet so sure. It tells us that the end is certain if the beginning is right.

I. The text is written from heaven's side of the question. It is the history—put in short—of all the saints who ever went to glory. They took a long journey, and at last they got safely home. The rest—how it was, why it was, all that makes up the interval—is the grace of God.

II. There were difficulties by the way: why are we not told of them? Because from the mountain top the way by which we have travelled looks level and easy. Things that were great at the time seem so small from that height that we do not care to see them.

III. What is it really to set out? It is to recognise and answer God's call. The great secret of life is to have a strong aim. All through his life Abraham had one single object in view. It was Canaan. The record of each ante-diluvian patriarch was, "He lived so many years, and he died." That is one side of the picture, but there is another: "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, Eleventh Series, p. 221.

REFERENCE: xii. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 843.

Chap. xii., ver. 10.—"Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there."

WENT down from one civilisation to another, went down from

one society to another, went down from one religion to another. Man is a traveller—not in one sense, but in all senses; and he is always travelling. We have to go out into the world; the question is, How are we going?

I. A widened world always tries a man's first faith and first ways of doing things; he gets the true perspective as he moves through widening space. Abraham went down from Ur of the Chaldees with a very narrow policy, and when he came into great Egypt he encountered the new civilisation with a lie. When a young man comes from comparative quietness and leisure to the bustle and strife of a great city, he must expect to have his faith rudely and constantly attacked. Christianity has to fight for every inch of its progress.

II. The great thing to be kept in mind is, that we have to enter into a hundred new worlds. We do not enter into the world once for all: within the world there are a thousand other worlds. We need guidance and preparation in view of the new worlds and Egypts into which we have to go. There has been only one man in this world who could safely go into every circle and society which this world contains. Jesus Christ was His name. With the spirit of Christ you can go anywhere and everywhere, and you can give all languages a new accent and a new meaning, and lift up all the relations of life into a nobler significance.

PARKER, *The Fountain*, June 9th, 1881.

I. EGYPT was to Abraham, to the Jewish people, to the whole course of the Old Testament, what the world with all its interests and pursuits and enjoyments is to us. It was the parent of civilisation, of learning, of royal power, of vast armies. From first to last this marvellous country, with all its manifold interests, is regarded as the home and refuge of the chosen race. By the stress laid on Egypt the Bible tells us that we may lawfully use the world and its enjoyments, that the world is acknowledged by true religion, as well as by our own natural instincts, to be a beautiful, a glorious, and, in this respect, a good and useful world. What was permitted as an innocent refreshment to Abraham, what was enjoined as a sacred duty on Moses and Apollos, what was consecrated by the presence of Christ our Saviour, we too may enjoy and admire and use. Power and learning and civilisation and art may all minister now, as they did then, to the advancement of the welfare of man and the glory of God.

II. The meeting of Abraham and Pharaoh, the contact of Egypt with the Bible, remind us forcibly that there is something better and higher even than the most glorious or the most luxurious or the most powerful and interesting sights and scenes of the world. The character and name of Abraham, as compared with that of the mighty country and the mighty people in the midst of which we thus for an instant find him, exemplify, in the simplest yet strongest colours, the grand truth that 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' To be in the world, but not of it; to use it without abusing it,—this is the duty which we find it so hard to follow; but it is the very duty which Abraham first, and our Lord afterwards, have set before us.

A. P. STANLEY, *Sermons in the East*, p. 1.

Chap. xii., etc.

I. NOTICE first the call of Abraham. (1) The call was addressed to him suddenly; (2) it required him to forsake his country and his kindred, while giving him no hope of return; (3) it sent him on a long and difficult journey, to a country lying more than three hundred miles away. Yet Abraham obeyed in willing submission to the command of God.

II. Notice Abraham's conquest over the kings. This is the first battle recorded in the word of God. It was after his rescue of Lot that Abraham was met by the mysterious Melchizedek. An awful shade of supernaturalism still rests upon this man, to whom some of the attributes of the Godhead seem to be ascribed, and who is always named with God and with God's Son. There are two lessons deducible from Abraham's conquests: (1) that military skill and experience are often easily vanquished by untaught valour, when that is at once inspired by impulse, guided by wisdom, and connected with a good cause; (2) that Christian duty varies at different times and in different circumstances.

III. Notice the covenants which were established between Abraham and God. From them we learn: (1) God's infinite condescension; (2) our duty of entering into covenant with God in Christ.

From the history of Abraham we see that God's intention was: (1) to secure to Himself one great accession from the idolatrous camp; (2) to send Abraham as a forerunner and a first step into the land which God had selected as His peculiar

property; (3) to create a family link of connection between God and a distinct race of people for long ages. Abraham was to be the microcosm to the coming macrocosm of the Jewish people, as they and their polity again were to be the microcosm to the sublimer macrocosm of Christianity.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 308.

REFERENCES: xii.—Parker, vol. i., p. 192; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 33; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 181; S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 96. xiii. 4.—Parker, vol. i., p. 362.

Chap. xiii., vers. 10-13.—"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere. . . . Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. . . . But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

THAT Lot was a good man in the ground of his character there is no reason to doubt. But good men have their besetting sins. Lot's was worldliness, and it cost him dear.

I. Consider some features of the choice which Lot made. (1) Worldly advantage was the chief element in determining his place in life. The volcanic fires, slumbering beneath, made the plain of Sodom so fertile that its riches had become proverbial; and the Jordan, which has now so short a course to the Dead Sea, then wandered through the plain, like the rivers of Eden. Lot's eye regarded neither the dangers sleeping beneath, nor the light of God above, but only the corn and wine and verdant pastures. (2) Lot's choice betrayed a want of generosity. Abraham gave to Lot the selection of place, and had Lot been capable of appreciating his generosity he would have declined to avail himself of the offer. But he grasped at it eagerly and took the richest side. Such men are the most unsatisfactory of friends, paining us constantly by their selfishness, and failing us in the hour of need. (3) Lot's choice showed disregard of religious privileges. The sins of the men of Sodom were of a peculiarly gross and inhuman kind; had Lot's religion been warm and bright he would not have ventured among them. He may have excused himself to his conscience by saying that he was going to do good, but when he left Sodom he could not count a single convert.

II. Consider the consequences of Lot's choice. (1) As he made worldly advantage his chief aim, he failed in gaining it.

Twice he lost his entire possessions; he left Sodom poorer than he entered it. He was stripped of the labours of years, and dared not even look behind on the ruin of his hopes. (2) As Lot failed in generosity to Abraham, he was repeatedly brought under the weightiest obligations to him. He took an unfair advantage of Abraham, but ere many years had passed he owed all he had—family, property, liberty—to Abraham's courageous interposition. (3) Lot's disregard of spiritual privileges brought on him a bitter entail of sin and shame. His own religious character suffered from his sojourn in Sodom. This alone can account for the grievous termination of his history. His life remains as a warning against the spirit of worldliness. Both worlds frequently slip from the grasp in the miserable attempt to gain the false glitter of the present.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 70.

REFERENCE: xiii. 10-13.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 171.

Chap. xiii., vers. 10, 11.

THE lesson to be gained from the history of Abraham and Lot is obviously this: that nothing but a clear apprehension of things unseen, a simple trust in God's promises, and the greatness of mind thence arising, can make us act above the world—indifferent, or almost so, to its comforts, enjoyments, and friendships; or, in other words, that its goods corrupt the common run even of religious men who possess them.

I. Abraham and Lot had given up this world at the word of God, but a more difficult trial remained. Though never easy, yet it is easier to set our hearts on religion or to take some one decided step, which throws us out of our line of life and in a manner forces upon us what we should naturally shrink from, than to possess in good measure the goods of this world and yet love God supremely. The wealth which Lot had hitherto enjoyed had been given him as a pledge of God's favour, and had its chief value as coming from Him. But surely he forgot this, and esteemed it for its own sake, when he allowed himself to be attracted by the riches and beauty of a guilty and devoted country.

II. God is so merciful that He suffers not His favoured servants to wander from Him without repeated warnings. Lot had chosen the habitation of sinners; still he was not left to himself. A calamity was sent to warn and chasten him: he and his property fell into the hands of the five kings. This was

an opportunity of breaking off his connection with the people of Sodom, but he did not take it as such.

III. The gain of this world is but transitory; faith reaps a late but lasting recompense. Soon the angels of God descended to fulfil in one and the same mission a double purpose: to take from Lot his earthly portion, and to prepare for the accomplishment of the everlasting blessings promised to Abraham; to destroy Sodom, while they foretold the approaching birth of Isaac.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: xiii. 10-12.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 8. xiii. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 27, vol. xx., p. 80. xiii. 12.—R. Redpath, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 287. xiii. 12, 13.—R. C. Trench, *Sermons, New and Old*, p. 258.

Chap. xiii., ver. 18 (with xiv. 13).—"Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord."

MAMRE is the first village that comes before us distinctly in any authentic history. If Ararat was the cradle of the races of our world, Mamre was the cradle of the Church.

I. Mamre was a church among the trees.

II. It was a refuge for faith. Abraham and the patriarchs were emigrants; they left for the honour of God. The East is full of traditions concerning Abraham and his hatred to idolatry, and how he forsook the worship of the fire and the sun. He had come from the neighbourhood where the Babel society was founded,—faith, not in God, but in the vanity of bricks—it had all ended in confusion, but the sacred memories of Mamre, where Abraham reared an altar to the Lord, these linger and send out their influence still. A high faithfulness ruled the life of Mamre, the life of domestic piety,—the first story given us of the life of faith, where Abraham raised an altar and called upon the name of the Lord.

III. The village of Mamre was the village of sacred promise. What night was that, when among its moorlands the Lord appeared unto Abraham in a vision and consecrated those heights by the glowing promises which we still recognise as true? In that little mountain hamlet was given the promise of Messiah's reign.

IV. Mamre: what guests came thither? Here was that great entertainment made, "where," says quaint Thomas Fuller, "the covert of the tree was the dining-room, probably the ground the board, Abraham the caterer, and Sarah the

cook; a welcome their cheer; angels, and Christ in the notion of an angel, their guests."

V. At Mamre are the oldest authentic graves of this earth—among them the grave of Abraham, the friend of God.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 167.

REFERENCES: xiii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 39; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 194; Parker, vol. i., p. 200, and *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 334. xiv. 1-17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 87.

Chap. xiv., vers. 18-20.—"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God, etc."

NEVER, perhaps, was any warlike expedition conceived in such simplicity of intention, or carried out with such entire unselfishness, as when Abraham led his trained servants to recover Lot and his goods from the hands of the confederate kings. It was as he was returning from this enterprise of high affection that he received the mysterious visit from Melchizedek.

I. Their interview began, as all our intercourse with God must begin, by an act first on the part of him who stood in the higher relationship. Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abraham. *Then* Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. This was communion. Communion is something more than prayer. God speaks to us, and of that speaking prayer is our return.

II. Very bountiful was the board which Melchizedek set for his friend—bread and wine—Nature in her most nourishing and her most exhilarating form. And we, too, have, at the hands of the Second Melchizedek, bread and wine. But to us they are but figures: the reality is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

III. As Melchizedek gave the bread and wine, he blessed. The very essence of the priestly character was to bless. And, true to the shadows that went before, when Christ came He blessed the world.

IV. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. Under the Levitical code every man was required to pay three tithes of his property—one for the Levites, one for the use of the temple and the great feasts, and one for the relief of the poor. The tithe was a recognition that all belonged to God. We, like Abraham, give our offerings to the great High Priest, who claims them of us by His one sacrifice of Himself, which is all our peace and all our hope.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 22

I. Consider the historical facts of this narrative. (1) Melchizedek makes his appearance at the close of the first war recorded in the annals of the human race. Abraham was on his journey home from the rescue of Lot, and had reached a place called the King's Dale, when his meeting with the priest took place. (2) Who was Melchizedek? There is an old tradition of the Jews to the effect that he was Shem, the son of Noah, Shem being his personal name, Melchizedek his official designation. This, however, is improbable, since (*a*) it is unlikely that Moses, who has hitherto spoken of Shem by his proper name, should here veil his identity under a different one; (*b*) it seems unlikely that Abraham and Shem could have been co-residents in the same land without intercourse; (*c*) it is unlikely that a man whose pedigree was distinctly known should have been selected as a typical instance of a man whose pedigree was altogether unknown. We are therefore limited to the conclusion that he was a Canaanitish prince, who retained the uncorrupted faith of his forefathers. (3) What was the secret of his peculiar greatness? His names suggest an explanation. He must have been eminently righteous to have earned such titles as "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace." He stood alone in his office, as priest of the most High God. He was known by undeniable tokens as the man whom God had consecrated to be His priest.

II. Consider the spiritual significance of this narrative of Melchizedek. (1) He was a symbol of the mystery connected with the Saviour's person. (2) He shadowed forth important truths in relation to Christ as our Priest. His priesthood was distinguished for its antiquity, its catholicity, its independence. (3) Melchizedek was the prefiguration of Christ as the King of His people. (4) The story seems to be a typical picture of Christ exercising His ministry of benediction.

C. Stanford, *Symbols of Christ*, p. 3.

References: xiv.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 209; Parker, vol. i., p. 204; *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 285. xiv. 18-20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 589.

Chap. xv., ver 1.—"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

I. God our shield. Man needs protection, for his life is a struggle. If he were an animal he might be left to Nature, for

Nature is adequate to the needs of all within her category · but transcending, and therefore lacking full adjustment to nature, he needs care and help beyond what she can render. Nature offers him no shield to protect him, nor can she reward him when the battle is over. (1) We need protection against the forces of nature. We are constantly brought face to face with nature's overpowering and destroying forces, and we find them relentless. We may outwit or outmaster them up to a certain point; beyond that we are swept helpless along their fixed and fatal current. God becomes our shield by assuring us that we belong to Himself rather than to nature. When that assurance is received we put ourselves into His larger order; we join the stronger power and link ourselves to its fortunes. (2) We need a shield against the inevitable evils of existence. For fifty or more years there is a triumphant sense of strength and adequacy; after that the tables are turned upon us. Heretofore life, the world the body, all have been for us; now they are against us—the shadow of our doom begins to creep upon us. God is our shield in the battle that seems won by death. Between ourselves longing for life and our devouring sense of finiteness stands God—a shield. He says, "Because I am the ever-living God you shall live also." (3) God is a shield against the calamities of life. (4) God is a shield against ourselves. One of the main uses of God, so to speak, is to give us another consciousness than that of self—a *God-consciousness*.

II. God our reward. (1) God's leading representations of true and righteous life are that it is not in vain, that it will be rewarded. That God will *bless* is the sum of our prayers. (2) God rewards in two ways: by the results of obedience, and, in a less clear but no less real way, by the direct gift or impartation of Himself. After we have entered the life of obedience we begin to find that we are acting in the sphere of two personalities—ourselves and God. And as we go on, all things at last resolve themselves into this complexion; we live and die with one all-satisfying word upon our lips—"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

T. T. MUNGER, *The Freedom of Faith*, pp. 73, 93.

REFERENCES: xv. 1.—Parker, vol. i., p. 209. xv. 2.—J. Kelly, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 165.

Chap. xv., vers. 5, 6.—"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness."

THESE two verses lie close together on one page of the Bible. They are part of a brief story of a brief event in one human life. Yet, as we read them, they seem to separate from each other, and to stand very far apart. The fifth verse is altogether of the past. It shows us the tent of the patriarch gleaming white in the clear starlight of the Eastern night. We learn with Abraham to look up and believe and be at rest. The sixth verse suggests thoughts of the nearer present. From the hour when St. Paul first cited this fact of Abraham's faith and his justification by faith, this verse has been taken out of the older story and bedded in our modern controversies.

I. In these verses lies the union of two things that God has joined together and that man is ever trying to separate—life and light. God revealed Himself to us, not by words that told of a Father, but by a life that showed a Father; not by a treatise on Fatherhood, but by the manifestation of a Son. And so He ever joins the light of precept with the life of practice.

II. We read that Abraham believed God—not then for the first time, not then only. He had heard God's voice before, and at its bidding had gone out to be an exile and pilgrim all his days. His faith was no intellectual assent to a demonstrated proposition; it was the trust of the heart in the voice of God. It was the belief, not that solves difficulties, but that rises above them.

III. Why was Abraham's faith counted to him for righteousness? Because, as all sin lies folded in one thought of distrust, so in one thought of trust lies all possible righteousness—its patience, its hope, its heroism, its endurance, its saintliness; and therefore He who sees the end from the beginning reckons it as righteousness. In the faith of Abraham lay all the righteous endurance, all the active service, of his believing life. This simple trust of Abraham made the practical motive power of his life, as it should make that of ours.

BISHOP MAGEE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 501.

REFERENCES: xv. 6.—W. M. Taylor, *The Limitations of Life*, p. 189; E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 235; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 844; T. T. Munger, *The Appeal to Life*, p. 187. xv. 7-21.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 38. xv. 8, 9.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 278. xv. 11.—

Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 420. xv. 12, 17.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 22. xv.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 230. xv., xvi.—Parker, vol. i., p. 213. xvi.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 252. xvi. 1.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 428. xvi. 3, 4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 425. xvi. 7.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 340; *Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i. (1887), p. 121.

Chap. xvi., ver. 13.—"Thou God seest me."

When Hagar fled into the wilderness from the face of her mistress she was visited by an angel, who sent her back; but together with this implied reproof of her impatience, he gave her a word to strengthen and console her. In this mixture of humbling and cheering thoughts she recognised the presence of her Lord, and hence "she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Such was the condition of men before Christ came: favoured with some occasional notices of God's regard for individuals, but for the most part instructed merely in His general providence. But under the New Covenant this distinct regard of Almighty God for every one of us is clearly revealed. When the Eternal Son came on earth in our flesh, God began to speak to *us* as individuals. There was a revelation face to face.

I. It is very difficult, in spite of the revelation made in the Gospel, to master the idea of this particular providence of God. We conceive that God works on a large plan, but we cannot realise that He sees and thinks of individuals. In trouble, especially when the world fails us, we often despair, because we do not realise the loving-kindness and presence of God.

II. In order that we may understand that in spite of His mysterious perfections He has a separate knowledge and regard for individuals, God has taken upon Him the thoughts and feelings of our own nature, which we all understand *is* capable of such personal attachments. The most winning property of our Saviour's mercy is its dependence on time and place, person and circumstance—in other words, its tender discrimination. Even Judas was followed and encompassed by His serene though grave regard till the very hour he betrayed Him.

III. Consider our Lord's behaviour to the strangers who came before Him. Judas was His friend, but *we* have never seen Him. Let His manner toward the multitude of men in the Gospels assure us how He will look on us. Almighty as He is, He could display a tender interest in all who approached Him.

IV. God beholds thee individually, whoever thou art. He

calls thee by thy name. Thou wast one of those for whom Christ offered up His last prayer, and sealed it with His precious blood. What a thought is this!—a thought almost too great for our faith. What am I, that God the Holy Ghost should enter into me and draw up my thoughts heavenward "with plaints innumerable"?

J. H. NEWMAN, *Selection from Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 204.

ADVENT brings with it the thought that we shall one day, every one of us, stand before our Judge, the All-seeing, the All-knowing. There are some things in religion which are among its plainest and most familiar teachings, which yet, when we come to think of what they really mean, seem almost too tremendous to bear. Among them is this truth—that the eye of God is always upon us. The Bible everywhere takes it for granted, and appeals to it.

I. We all know that if there is anything true in the world, it is that God, who made us, must see and know all that we are and all that we do. What is the good, then, of fighting against what is inevitable, what is so certain? We ought to live and learn to live all day long with the thought that God's eye is upon us, if no other reason, for this one alone—that this is the truth, that this is the real condition under which we must live.

II. The thought of God's eye upon us is usually looked upon as a thought to restrain and bridle us in the hour of temptation and carelessness; and so it is. But is this all? Is it fixed on us only to make us feel our infinite distance from Him who is our Father and our God, only to make us shrink and tremble before Him? In our cowardice and with our selfish love of forbidden things we miss what is meant not merely to restrain us, but to be the greatest and most unfailing of our comforts. The thought that God sees us always is His great encouragement and help to His children in doing right. His eye is not the eye of a Judge and Ruler only, but of a Shepherd and Father, the Lover of the souls of men, these poor souls of ours and of our brethren, not sparing even His own Son for them. So in those bitter times, which seem to shut out all remaining hope while we are here, we shall know and feel that we are being watched by an eye of tenderness and sympathy deeper and truer than even that of any man on earth for his suffering friend. And so may we prepare ourselves for that day when

our eyes shall be unsealed and we shall meet and behold each other.

R. W. CHURCH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 345.

REFERENCES: xvi. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 85, and vol. xxxi., No. 1869. xvii.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p 279.

Chap. xvii., ver. 1.—"The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

IN a certain sense we must all walk before God, whether in solitude or among the haunts of men. But it is open to us to realise His presence, or to dismiss it from our minds. It is the first of these courses which God counsels Abraham to adopt. The words imply that the realisation of the Divine presence is the secret of all perfection. The text answers the question as to how the work of our calling may be done devoutly. It bids us "do all in God" by habitual mindfulness of His presence.

I. The counsel to be mindful of God's presence might seem to be quite practicable for those who have to work merely with their hands. But work which involves thought seems to preclude the realisation of the Divine presence at the moment of its being done. In answer to this we need only observe that all that is necessary is the consciousness that God's eye is upon us. Consciousness of a presence need not interfere with the most active operations of mind. The mind of a speaker may be intently occupied while he is making an extempore address, yet all the time he remembers that the eye of the audience is upon him. Consciousness of their presence forms the very groundwork of his mind.

II. The conception of God's presence will take different shapes in different minds. We may regard Him as locally present everywhere, the veil of matter screening Him from our view; or we may regard Him as having a certain intimate connection with our minds, as upholding momentarily in us the powers of life and thought.

III. In cultivating the consciousness of the Divine presence, we shall find it useful to catch at every help which our circumstances afford. If our hearts are right and true, we may find Christ—or rather may be found of Him—not only in the quiet country, but in the busy city, in the midst of the traffic of secular affairs.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 172.

THERE are two things here to be considered: (1) The revelation which God makes of Himself; and (2) the conduct He requires of Abram as the subject or as the recipient of that revelation.

I. The revelation: "I am the Almighty God." God is always sufficient. He is enough for every being and for every occasion, responsibility and work. This Almightiness includes: (1) all knowledge, including foreknowledge; (2) all wisdom; (3) all authority; (4) all power.

II. The requirement: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect. These words require: (1) an onward and forward step; (2) the habitual recognition of God.

All that these words require is required on the basis of the revelation. Every position involves a corresponding responsibility, and knowledge is no exception. Get some truth that you have never had before; your possession enlarges your responsibility. This revelation to Abram showed that there could be no excuse for that which is contrary to uprightness in the service of God. If the God whom we serve be Almighty, He knows, judges, protects, frustrates, fulfils. Coming short in the service of God through fear dishonours God; it casts doubt upon His power and resources, upon His goodness and love; and he who has recourse to crooked devices sins against his own soul.

S. MARTIN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 878.

REFERENCE: xvii. 1—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 263.

Chap. xvii., vers. 1, 2.

I. THE sun, the moon, the stars, were the old gods of the East, the Elohim, the high and mighty ones., who ruled over men, over their good or bad fortunes, over the weather, the cattle, the crops, sending burning drought, pestilence, sunstroke, and those moonstrokes of which the Psalmist speaks when he says, "The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night." And these the old Easterns worshipped in some wild confused way. But to Abraham it was revealed that the sun, the moon and the stars were not Elohim, the high and mighty ones: that there was but one Elohim, one high and mighty One, the Almighty Maker of them all.

II. Merely to believe that there is one God is a dead faith, which will never be counted for righteousness, because it

will never make a man righteous, doing righteous and good deeds as Abraham did. Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness because it was righteousness, and made him do righteous deeds. (1) His faith in God made him brave. He went forth he knew not whither, but he had put his trust in God and he did not fear. (2) Faith made him high-minded, generous, and courteous; as when he bids Lot go whither he will with his flocks and herds. Abraham was a plain man, dwelling in tents, but still, as the children of Heth said of him, a mighty prince, not merely in wealth of flocks and herds, but a prince in manners and a prince in heart. (3) Faith in God made Abraham a truly pious man,—it made him the friend of God. His communion with God is the especial glory of Abraham's character. This gave him his name, "the friend of God"; or, as his descendants the Arabs call him to this day, simply "The Friend."

III. Abraham believed God because there was in his heart something which there is not in all men's hearts—something which answered to God's call, and made him certain that the call was from God—even the Holy Spirit of God. Blessed is the man who has chosen his share of Abraham's faith: he and his children after him shall have their share of Abraham's blessing.

C. KINGSLEY, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 59.

REFERENCES: xvii. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 845, vol. xviii., No. 1082. xvii. 1-3.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 270. xvii. 2-8.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 270. xvii. 5.—J. Morgan, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 382. xvii. 7.—J. Guthrie, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 34. xvii. 9-27.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 20. xvii. 16.—W. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 399. xviii. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 449; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 203, vol. iii., p. 69. xviii. 1-8.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 292. xviii. 1-15.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. xii., p. 345. xviii. 9-17.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 296. xviii. 13, 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 280. xviii. 16-18.—*Good Words* (1860), p. 218. xviii. 17-19.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 299.

Chap. xviii., ver. 19.—"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, etc."

I. THE vale of Sodom was a region blooming and smiling in all the riches of nature; on every hand there was something to raise the thoughts to the Creator. But amidst all

this, what was man? His wickedness was so aggravated and extreme, that the region itself was doomed to perish with its inhabitants. Sin still infects the fair field of nature, and it is this which spoils the beauty of the scene. If all the sin in the world could become a visible thing, it would blast and overpower in our view all the beauty of nature. The sin of Sodom was so aggravated that its cry went up to heaven, and the righteous Governor was obliged to manifest Himself.

II. It is impossible not to be struck with the calmness and quietness with which the work of vengeance proceeded. Three persons came on a friendly visit to Abraham. They accepted his hospitality; spoke with him on a matter of complacent interest—the renewed assurance of his posterity. Then "the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom." We are left in the dark as to one circumstance here. Only *two* of the persons went on to Sodom, leaving Abraham to converse with the Almighty. The third disappears from our view—unless he was a manifestation of the Divine Being himself, and the same that Abraham conversed with in that solemn character.

III. Notice what value the Lord must set on the righteous, when for the sake of ten such men he would have spared Sodom. Only *one* righteous man dwelt in Sodom, and he was saved.

IV. The precise manner of the fearful catastrophe is beyond our conjecture. It would seem that an earthquake either accompanied or followed it, but the "fire from heaven" is intimated as the grand chief agent of the destruction. The people of Sodom had no time for speculations; there was just time for terror and conscience and despair. Yet our Lord says there is a still greater guilt, a more awful destruction even than theirs. The man that lives and dies rejecting Him had better have been exposed to the rain of fire and brimstone and gone down in the gulf of the vale of Siddim.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, vol. i., p. 103.

REFERENCE: xviii. 19.—R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 125.

Chap. xviii., ver. 22.—"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

EVEN under the Old Testament, there were certain visits of Christ to our world which we cannot but consider as earnests or shadows of His great advent. It is clear that in very ancient times God appeared to His servants in the form of a man.

I. From many passages in the Old and New Testaments (notably Isaiah lxiii. 8, 9, John viii. 56) we are led to believe: (1) that Christ exercised great concern in the affairs of the Old Testament Church; (2) that He did at certain periods discover Himself in the garb which He was afterwards to assume, and which when assumed He went on to wear for ever; (3) that He was the superior angel whom we find speaking under that manifestation, and to whom, always, Divine honours were paid.

II. The narrative in this chapter opens by telling us generally that "the Lord appeared unto Abraham." How the Lord appeared is related in the rest of the chapter. (1) To all his three guests Abraham was kind, hospitable, reverential; but to one he was more. From the first that one attracted his regard. He addressed him at once as "my Lord." (2) In the conversation which ensued there are certain things which all said together, and certain things which only one says. The former are comparatively trivial; the latter most important. (3) When the men were gone, we have these very discriminating words: "Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

III. Note some points in Christ's character and work brought out in this chapter. (1) He was accompanied by the ministration of angels. (2) He condescended to receive from man. (3) He exercised the two offices of a promiser and a reprover. (4) He came to Abraham as a Friend in sympathy, but He came also as a mighty Deliverer and an avenging Judge.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 228.

REFERENCES: xviii. 22.—Bishop Woodford, *Cambridge Lent Sermons*, 1864, p. 73; C. J. Vaughan, *Harrow Sermons*, p. 371; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 343.

Chap xviii., vers. 22, 30.—"But Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

THE intercession of Abraham is the first prayer that the Bible records; and in its great characteristics, human and spiritual, it is one of the most remarkable. It is the intercession of a good man, a friend of God, for men who, in their wickedness and their defiance of God, had well-nigh approached the utmost possibilities of human evil.

I. A man's praying power is not an arbitrary thing; it is the result of long antecedent spiritual processes. It is very significant that it is Abraham and not Lot who is the intercessor for

Sodom. (1) Jehovah does not even impart His confidence to Lot; only at the last moment, when all is determined, He mercifully sends His messengers to bring him to a place of safety. (2) Even supposing Lot had been made acquainted with Jehovah's purpose, he would not have been capable of interceding for Sodom as Abraham did. He had not the requisite spiritual qualifications. There was spiritual life in Lot, but it ever leaned to the worldly side of things. There was spiritual life in Abraham, but it leaned to the heavenly side of things.

II. The praying power of man is conditioned upon the circumstances by which he surrounds himself. Abraham was at Mamre; Lot in Sodom.

III. Even when God vouchsafes to visit a man, much of his spiritual blessing depends on his character and circumstances.

IV. It is instructive to compare the intercession of Abraham with the pleadings of Lot when the angels sought to deliver him. The prayer of Abraham is perfect in its humility, when daring in its boldness. The prayer of Lot is troubled, selfish, and self-willed.

V. There is one contrast more, which is very suggestive. The narrow, selfish, self-willed prayer of Lot was answered; the holy, Christ-like intercession of Abraham was unavailing. Therefore it is no criterion of a right or a wrong prayer, that it does not receive the kind of answer we solicit.

H. ALLON, *Congregationalist*, vol. i., p. 201.

REFERENCES: xviii. 22, 23.—H. Allon, *The Vision of God*, p. 197. xviii. 23-25.—A. W. Momerie, *Preaching and Hearing*, pp. 174, 189. xviii. 23, 33.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 304.

Chap. xviii., ver. 25.—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

ABRAHAM had learned that to address himself to God's justice was better even than to appeal to His mercy. And for this reason,—it is a stronger basis. Justice is a more definite thing than mercy. Every man who feels his sins should lay firm hold on the thought that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Then we stand upon a rock.

I. The greatest requisite of a judge is justice. The last great judgment will be characterised by the most exquisite justice. All the justice of this world is merely a reflection of this attribute of the Almighty.

II. It seems essential to the dignity and uprightness of that tribunal that we believe equally two things: (1) That God having been pleased to lay down only one way of salvation,

no man who, having been made acquainted with that way, attempts to get to heaven by any other, can be admitted; (2) that no man, who is in earnest about his salvation, can or shall be lost.

III. Here the question arises, What is the state before God now? what will be the final condition of those who have never heard the name of Christ? We must keep to the one thought—the justice of the last judgment shall be vindicated. We inherit from Adam an entail of condemnation. Jesus Christ by His death rolled back the entail of condemnation from all mankind. These two facts are co-extensive. No man perishes because of Adam's sin: God has cancelled that evil by the death of His Son. From the second chapter of Romans we gather that every man will be judged and dealt with according *to his conscience;* and if any man have really lived up to the light that was in him, even though that light was only the light of reason and nature, that man will not eternally perish. The man who does not perish because he has obeyed his own conscience is saved for Christ's sake, even though he never heard His name. He owes his salvation to an unknown Saviour.

IV. Does this view affect injuriously the work of missions? No; because (1) it does not follow, because a heathen who obeys his conscience will not perish, that therefore he can attain the same degree of eternal happiness as a Christian. By making him a Christian we put him in a better position. (2) Consider the very small chance there is that any heathen will follow his conscience. Christ bids us "preach the Gospel to every creature.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 117.

REFERENCES: xviii. 25.—T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 15; R. H. Story, *Good Words*, 1877, p. 128; S. Cox, *Expositions*, 1st series, p. 54; W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 376.

Chap. xviii., ver. 32.—"And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

I. NOTICE first the words of God which introduce this history. "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great," etc. Behind this human manner of speaking what a lesson is here! The judgments of God from time to time overtake guilty nations and guilty men; but, huge and overwhelming catastrophes as these often are, there is nothing hasty, blind, precipitate about them. He is evermore the same God who, when the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah waxed great, is described as going down to see and

inquire whether they had "done altogether according to the cry of it."

II. In God's assurance to Abraham that if there are fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, or even ten righteous men found in the city He will not destroy it, we may recognise a very important law of His government of the world: this, namely,—that it is not the presence of evil but the absence of good which brings the long-suffering of God to an end. However corrupt any fellowship of men may be, however far gone in evil, yet so long as there is a sound, healthy kernel in it of righteous men, that is, of men who love and fear God and will witness for God, there is always hope.

III. This promise of God, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake," shows us what righteous men, lovers and doers of the truth, are. They are as the lightning conductors, drawing aside the fiery bolts of His vengance, which would else have long since scorched, shattered, and consumed a guilty world. Oftentimes, it may be, they are little accounted of among men, being indeed the hidden ones of God crying in their secret places for the things which are done against the words of God's lips. The world may pass them, may know nothing of them, yet it is for their sakes that the world is endured and continues unto this day.

IV. Does not this remind us of one duty on behalf of others which we might effectually fulfil if a larger measure of grace dwelt in our hearts?—I mean the duty of prayer and intercession for others. Prayer for others is never lost, is never in vain; often by it we may draw down blessing upon others, but always and without fail it will return in blessing on ourselves.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 190.

REFERENCES: xviii. 32.—W. Morley Punshon, *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 9; J. Oswald Dykes, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 182; Parker, *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 241.

Chap. xix., ver. 26.—"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

THIS is the whole of the record. The offence consisted only in a look; and that a look directed towards a city which may have been her birthplace, and which contained many that were dear to her by relationship and by friendship. The vengeance taken was most signal and appalling. Here is a case in which there seems a want of proportion between the sin and its

recompense. But the fact that our Lord uses the admonition "Remember Lot's wife" shows that a moral end was to be subserved by the Divine interference. Lot's wife was meant to be an example to the men of every generation.

I. God's moral government required the interference. The punishment took its measure, not so much from the greatness of the sin, as from the nature of the lessons to be given.

II. Consider the sin committed by Lot's wife. She looked back; it may be she attempted to turn back. She, a rescued one, had no right to pause and grieve for such sinners as were left behind in Sodom. She was guilty of a positive act of disobedience, for the parting injunction of the angel had been "Look not behind thee."

III. Her fate teaches a great lesson as to the duty of decision in religion. Deliverance is conditional. If we flee as those who hear behind them the tramp of the destroyer, if we rush as those who see the daylight hastening away, we shall be saved; but if our heart is with the stuff, or the friends that remain behind in Sodom, then "Remember Lot's wife." "No man having put his hand to the plough and *looking back* is fit for the kingdom of heaven."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2445.

REFERENCES: xix. 26.—R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 249; R. W. Evans, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 30; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 99.

Gen. xix.

NOTICE: I. Sodom's sinfulness. Her sins were committed amidst an unbounded flush of prosperity; they were committed amidst scenes of much natural loveliness, Nature being outraged before the eye of her most beautiful forms; and they were committed not only in opposition to Nature's silent, but to God's spoken, warnings.

II. Notice Sodom's warnings. One was given by the entrance of Lot within its gates; another was given by the advent of Chedorlaomer and the invaders from the east. Abraham and Melchizedek cast their sublime and awful shadows from the King's Dale southward upon Gomorrah's walls; but the sinners within felt not the hallowing sense of their presence, trembled not at the steps of their majesty.

III. Notice Sodom's intercessor Abraham's prayer shows: (1) the confidence that existed between himself and God; (2) it shows God's personal knowledge of evil; (3) it shows

God's great reluctance to punish; (4) it gives proof of the tremendous guilt of Sodom.

IV. This terrible catastrophe lies in a bye-path of the Divine procedure; it did not relate immediately to the general course of the patriarchal dispensation, and yet what an awful "aside" did the fall of these cities utter! It must have struck Abraham with a new sense of the evil of sin and of the holiness and justice of God. In the Dead Sea, Israel felt, and we should feel too, that God's anger was, so to speak, sunk and slumbering on the outskirts of the land, and might at any moment awake and march out in all its fury on the impenitent.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: xix.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 43; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 313; *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 443; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 203, vol. iii., p. 69; J. Foster, *Lectures*, vol. i., p. 103. xix. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 601. xix. 12, 13.—W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 399. xix. 12, 26.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 107. xix. 12-30.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 91, and vol. xxii., p. 156. xix. 14.—*Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i. (1877), p. 264; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 120. xix. 15.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes* (1884), p. 9. xix. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 789; Bishop Ryle, *Holiness, its Nature, etc.*, p. 212. xix. 16, 17.—S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 40. xix. 17.—A. W. Hare, *Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. i., p. 201; S. A. Brooke, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 143; F. O. Morris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 251; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 119. xix. 17-19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 550. xix. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 248; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 81. xix. 24, 25.—Parker, vol. i., p. 222. xix. 26.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 171. xix. 27, 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 602. xix. 27-29.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 330. xix. 29.—E. Cooper, *Fifty-two Sermons*, p. 93.

Chap. xx., ver. 11.—"And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place."

THE true fear of God was at that moment in Abimelech's heart, and not in Abraham's; it was Abimelech who was playing the Christian part, that of the child of the light and of the day; Abraham for the moment was the child of fear, darkness, and night.

I. Consider first the origin of the habit of harsh judgment. There are two main sources from which it springs. (1) The first a heathen Roman can illustrate for us: "With a great sum obtained I this freedom" (Acts xxii. 27, 28). The thing has cost us much; we feel it is hard to believe that it can be widely

shared. Abraham had made a terrible sacrifice to assure his calling. As for those easy, jovial, prosperous heathen, surely the fear of God was not there. (2) A second source of this harshness of judgment is the predominance in all of us of the natural aristocratic principle over the Christian principle of communion. Men naturally believe in election. But with rare exceptions, they naturally believe themselves to be the elect. It is hard indeed to believe that a private possession gains instead of loses by being shared by all mankind.

II. The histories of Scripture are a perpetual warning against narrow and selfish judgments of men. It is as if the Spirit had resolved that the virtues of those outside the pale should be kept clearly before the eyes of men. God is no respecter of persons, and He keeps hold in ways, of which we little dream, of the most unlikely human hearts.

III. The true Christian policy in judging mankind: (1) let your personal fellowship be based on the clear explicit manifestation of that which is in tune with your higher life and Christ's; (2) as for those who are without, believe that God is nearer to them than you wot of, and has more to do with them than you dream.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 402.

REFERENCES: xx.—Parker, vol. i., p. 226; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 336.

Chap. xxi., vers. 15-19.—"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, etc."

IN this hidden well, which Ishmael's prayer uncovered, lies many a true lesson, if only we have the right sort of pitcher to dip and draw.

I. How came the well to be there, just where and when it was wanted? The Arab shepherds who dug it never meant it for wandering travellers, but for their own flocks. God guided the steps of Hagar to it. Life is full of hidden wells —stored-up blessings, ready at the right moment to supply the answer to prayer. God foresees our prayers as well as our necessities.

II. Our encouragement to pray is not our own goodness, but God's. We plead not the name of Abraham, or of any earthly parent or friend, but the name of Jesus, God's own dear Son.

III. Learn from this story not to think little things of no importance, and not to be afraid to pray to God about little things as well as great. There are two reasons which prove that God does not disdain to attend to little things: (1) He has made many more little things than great, and has made the greatest things to depend on the least; (2) God is so great, that the difference between what we call great and little is to Him as nothing; and He is so wise, that nothing—not a thought or atom—is small enough to escape His eye.

IV. Prayer itself is a hidden well; a secret source of strength and joy and wisdom, not only in times of trouble, but always. Do not wait for trouble to drive you to prayer, but say, like the Psalmist, "O God, Thou art *my* God, early will I seek Thee."

E. R. CONDER, *Children's Sermons*, "Drops and Rocks," p. 25

REFERENCE: xxi. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 974.

Chap. xxi., ver. 17.—"And God heard the voice of the lad."

A MINISTER once said to a boy, "Can you pray? How did you pray?" He said, "Sir, I begged." He could not have used a better word: praying is begging of God.

Prayer is very much like a bow. The arrow is a promise; the string is faith. You use your faith; with your faith you send a promise up to the skies. David said, "I will make my prayer and *look up*,"—look up and see where the arrow comes down again.

There are a great many things to think of in prayer. Let me tell you of one or two.

(1) You should always address God by one of His names or titles, in a very reverent way. You have to thank God for His mercies; you have to confess to God your sins; you have to trust God to bless you; you have to ask for other people; then to end all "For Jesus Christ's sake." Tell God anything you like, only take care you ask it all in the name of Jesus, because we have no promise to prayer that God will hear us unless we add the name of Jesus to it.

(2) Every boy and girl ought to have a form of prayer, though they need not always use it. A psalm is sometimes very good. But the more you practise, the more you will have to say out of your heart.

(3) Wandering thoughts often trouble us in prayer. They are like the birds which flew down on Abraham's altar and spoilt the sacrifice. We must drive away these little birds; we must ask God to keep off the wandering thoughts.

(4) When you are praying always remember that there is One who is offering up that prayer for you to God. That prayer does not go to God just as you send it up: but before it gets to the throne of God it gets much sweeter. Jesus puts His sweet incense into our prayer. So God will be pleased with us for His sake.

(5) Pray *always*. You cannot always kneel down and pray, but little prayers in your hearts can be always going up. These little darts or ejaculations can be sent up anywhere, at any time.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons to Children*, 5th series, p. 105.

I. THIS passage teaches a lesson to parents. It teaches that God is with us at our work; that the wilderness of life is full of Him; that in the waste of this world He is close beside us; that our children are His children; that He sees them under the shrub of the desert; that He has a property in them, a work for them, a work in them; that they are heirs, not of the desert in which they seem to be perishing, but of the many mansions of their heavenly Father's house. Believe that your children have been united to Christ; and that if you teach them to claim this union for themselves, its strength and its healing shall come out for them day by day as you seek to bring them up for Him.

II. This passage contains instruction for the young themselves. (1) God saw the lad as he lay beneath the desert shrub. And He sees you, wherever you are, at home or abroad—His eye is ever on you. Learn this lesson first—God's eye is ever on the lad, and sees him wherever he is. (2) God was the true protector of the lad, and He is your true and only Friend. He sees in you the adopted children of Jesus Christ. Even from your helpless infancy has He thus looked on you, and had purposes of love towards you. (3) God had a purpose for the lad and a work in him. He meant him to become a great nation in these waste places. His casting out, dark as it seemed, was preparing the way for this; and so it is with you. Everything around you is ordered by God for an end. That end is truly your best spiritual happiness. (4) God heard the voice of the lad; and He will hear you in every time of your trouble. Ishmael was heard because he was the son of Abraham; you will be heard because you are the son of God through Christ.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 115.

Homeless, helpless: is there any sight more pitiable than this —a child in the wilderness? Think of the hundreds about us, pinched with hunger, perishing in sore need; the young life passing away neglected, to appear before the throne of God, there by its presence to plead against us, or else rising up in this wilderness to avenge our disregard,—"a wild man, whose hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

I. We dwell on these words especially as teaching the Father's care for the children. Do not think of this event as occurring under a dispensation so different from ours that we can find in it no distinct teaching for to-day—very beautiful, but of little worth save for its beauty. These words mean a thousandfold more to us than they could do to Hagar. The Father had not then revealed Himself in the only-begotten Son. The Son of God went away into the wilderness; He shivered in the cold night-blast; He felt the pitiless beating of the storm. And now in all the world there is not one poor child shut out from His sympathy, for He Himself has lived a child of poverty and woe.

II. Not to angels now is this work of rescue given. It is our high honour and prerogative to be the ministers of the Father's love. Angels may bring the tidings, perhaps, but only that we may obey. Angels shall reveal the means, but only that we may carry the blessing. Hagar must fill the bottle and give the lad to drink; she must lift him up and hold him by the hand.

M. G. Pearse, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 303.

References: xxi. 17.—Bishop Walsham How, *Plain Words to Children*, p. 90. xxi. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 681; vol. xix., No. 1123; vol. xxv., No. 1461. xxi. 22.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 416. xxi. 22-33.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 336.

Gen. xxi.

In the story of Hagar and Ishmael, we notice:—

I. The outcast. As Abraham is the father of all the faithful, so the Arab Ishmael is the father of all our outcasts. He was an impudent boy, who mocked his betters, and became "a wild ass of a man," whose hand was against every man. Do not despise the poor outcast children of our cities. Respect them for their sorrows; take them into your pity; let them find a home in

your heart. For are we not all outcasts, the children of Adam the outcast? Are we not the followers of Him who makes the outcasts of earth the inmates of heaven?

II. The God of the outcast. The highest kindness is to be personally interested in us and to meet our wants. And God showed such kindness to Ishmael. Notice, it was the voice of the *lad*, not of the mother, that God heard. God pities most those who most need pity; and so should you. When Ishmael is before you, try to be godlike.

III. The angel of the outcast. It is part of angels' work to cheer and save the outcast. A church near Dijon contains a monument with a group of the Bible prophets and kings, each holding a scroll of mourning from his writings. But above is a circle of angels who look far sadder than the prophets whose words they read. They see more in the sorrows than the men below them see. The angels see the whole of the sins and sorrows of the young, and so rejoice more than we can do over the work of God among them. The orphans of society are cast upon the fatherhood of God, and He wishes them to be the children of the Church and the children of our adoption.

IV. The allegory of the outcast. Look at that lad in the desert perishing of thirst and a fountain at his side. Are you not a spiritual Ishmael to-day, a wanderer upon life's highway, perishing of thirst at the side of the fountains of living water? Earth is a sandy desert, which holds nothing that can slake your soul's thirst. But Jesus Christ has opened the fountain of life, and now it is at your very side.

J. WELLS, *Bible Children*, p. 19

REFERENCES: xxi.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 50; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 346; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*. xxi. 6.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 167. xxi. 9-12.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 356. xxi. 14.—Parker, vol. i., p. 231. xxi. 20.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 25.

Chap. xxii., ver. 1.—"God did tempt Abraham."

CONSIDER: I. The circumstances of Abraham when this trial came. His hope was set on Isaac as the medium through which God's promise could be fulfilled, and he had been encouraged by observing him rising year after year to the age and stature of manhood.

II. God's connection with the trial. He subjected Abraham to a testing trial in order to prove his faith. (1) There was

no attempt in the action of God, bearing upon Abraham, in the least to diminish the patriarch's affection for his son. (2) In the command binding Abraham to offer up his son there was an assertion of Jehovah's right to be regarded as the supreme object of His creatures' love.

III. Abraham under and after the trial. (1) His fear of God was tested by this trial; (2) his faith in God was tested by the trial. But the result was blessed to him in these four ways: (*a*) He obtained an attestation from heaven of his fear and of his faith; (*b*) he obtained a new revelation of Messiah as the atoning Surety; (*c*) he brought back with him alive his only son, whom he loved; (*d*) he held "Jehovah Jireh" in the grasp of his faith, and had Him pledged to care for him always.

Application.—(1) Learn from this text that true faith is sure to be tested faith. (2) The text teaches us that all love must be subordinated to love for God. (3) Learn from this passage that the only way to be truly strong is to have faith in God. (4) Learn from this text that God will never fail under the leanings of faith. (5) Learn from this text that no one need expect an attestation of his fear and faith except when these are revived and exercised.

J. KENNEDY, *Sermons*, No. 40.

REFERENCES: xxii. 1.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls* (1880), p. 48; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 261. xxii. 1, 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 134.

Chap. xxii., vers. 1-8.—"It came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, etc."

IT is by trial that the character of a Christian is formed. Each part of his character, like every part of his armour, is put to the proof; and it is the proof that tests, after all, the strength both of resistance and defence and attack.

I. The voice of God to Abraham was not heard in audible words; it was a voice in the soul constantly directing him to duty and self-sacrifice. The voice told him, as he thought,—I do not for a moment say as God meant,—that his duty was to sacrifice his son. The memories of olden days may have clung and hovered about him. He remembered the human sacrifices he had seen in his childhood; the notion of making the gods merciful by some action of man may still have lingered in his bosom. We have here the first instance of that false and perverse interpretation which made the letter instead of the spirit to rule the human heart.

II. As Abraham increases in faith he grows in knowledge, until at last more and more he can hear "Lay not thy hand upon thy son." "God will provide Himself a sacrifice" bursts from his lips before the full light bursts upon his soul. In this conflict Abraham's will was to do all that God revealed for him to do. In every age and in every station faith is expressed in simple dutifulness, and this faith of Abraham is, indeed, of the mind of Christ. We may be perplexed, but we need not be in despair. When we arrive on Mount Moriah, then the meaning of the duty God requires of us will be made clear. And as we approach the unseen, and our souls are more schooled and disciplined to God, we shall find that to offer ourselves and lose ourselves is to find ourselves in God more perfect.

T. J. ROWSELL, *Family Churchman*, March 16th, 1887.

Chap. xxii., vers. 1-19.

ABRAHAM is the first, if not the greatest, of the heroes of the Hebrew people. A man dazed by life's illusions, a dreamer of strange dreams and a seer of impossible visions, he has yet a firm hold of solid fact, and is ready, in the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers, to cross the Euphrates and travel to Damascus, that he may separate himself from idolatry. From his many days of trial, take those in which he needs the strength of God the most, and see whether he has it, what he does with it, and what comes of his use of it.

I. Could any day have exceeded in misery the time when Abraham first felt he must offer his son, or be guilty of disobedience to God? It was a day of fearful temptation; but Abraham made it unspeakably worse by misreading God's message and mistaking the significance of the strong impulse that disturbed and tempted him. God said to him, "Offer thy son,"—not "Slay thy son," but simply surrender him as an offering into God's hands. Abraham fell into the sin of the heathen world around by reading God's command as a commission to murder his own child. It was a grievous fault, and grievously did Abraham answer it.

II. Abraham was not left in this day of trial and mistake to himself. God met him in his difficulty and aided im in his dilemma. Abraham's mistake was on the surface of his life, and not at its heart; in the form of his offering, and not its spirit. God reckoned his calmly persisting faith, his actual and suffering obedience, as righteousness. He followed it with a

fuller statement of the Abrahamic gospel, and exalted Abraham to the fatherhood of the faithful all the world over.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 19. (See also Appendix, p. 425.)

THE birth of Isaac brought Abraham nearer to God; though he had believed in Him so long, it was as if he now believed in Him for the first time—so much is he carried out of himself, such a vision has he of One who orders ages past and to come, and yet is interested for the feeblest of those whom He has made. Out of such feelings comes the craving for the power to make some sacrifice, to find a sacrifice which shall not be nominal but real.

I. The Book of Genesis says, "God did tempt Abraham." The seed did not drop by accident into the patriarch's mind; it was not self-sown; it was not put into him by the suggestion of some of his fellows. It was his Divine Teacher who led him on to the terrible conclusion, "The sacrifice that I must offer is that very gift that has caused me all my joy."

II. Abraham must know what God's meaning is; he is certain that in some way it will be proved that He has not designed His creature to do a wicked and monstrous thing, and yet that there is a purpose in the revelation that has been made to him; that a submission and sacrifice, such as he has never made yet, are called for now. He takes his son; he goes three days' journey to Mount Moriah; he prepares the altar and the wood and the knife; his son is with him, but he has already offered up *himself*. And now he is taught that this is the offering that God was seeking for; that when the *real* victim has been slain, the ram caught in the thicket is all that is needed for the symbolical expression of that inward oblation.

III. When this secret had been learnt, every blessing became an actual vital blessing; every gift was changed into a spiritual treasure. Abraham had found that sacrifice lies at the very root of our being; that our lives depend upon it; that all power to be right and to do right begins with the offering up of ourselves, because it is thus that the righteous Lord makes us like Himself.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*, p. 33.

REFERENCES: xxii. 1-19.—J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 332 (also *Sunday Magazine*, 1871, p. 345); *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 314; 2nd series, vol. i., p. 305; W. Hubbard, *Christian World Pulpit*,

vol. xiv., p. 228; J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, pp. 31, 64. xxii. 1-20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 156. xxii. 2.—Parker, vol. i., p. 235; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 868; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 5; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvii., p. 148. xxii. 6.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year* (*Holy Week*), p. 454.

Chap. xxii., ver. 7.—"Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Thus unconscious spoke our human nature of its terrible want, and of the almost hopelessness of the remedy for that want. The want was occasioned by sin. That terrible evil still exists in the world, and there is no real remedy but from this one source of revelation and belief in Christ. Those who on that day ascended the mount found the remedy provided. A sacrifice was found and substituted, and it was a type of what befell long afterwards, when God provided His own beloved Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Bishop Claughton, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 565.

Reference: W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 158.

Chap. xxii., vers. 7, 8.—"They went both of them together."

These words are twice repeated in this narrative; they mean something more than that Abraham and Isaac climbed the mountain track side by side: they were together in heart as well as in bodily presence; in submission of will as well as in direction of steps. Isaac was at this time in the vigour of his youth; his father was a very old man. Unless he had been a willing victim there could have been no question at all of his being sacrificed.

I. Abraham and Isaac are an example of the unhesitating obedience of faith. Abraham knew that his own son had been named as the appointed victim; yet even so he could feel that God would provide that victim, and therefore he could submit. Isaac acquiesced in his father's submission, content that God should provide the victim, even though it were himself.

II. We have here an example which finds its perfect antitype in the compact of sacrifice between God the Father and God the Son. The sacrifice of Calvary was as much the eternal design of the Son as of the Father: the Father laid nothing on the Son but what the Son freely took on Himself.

III. The conduct of Isaac has not only a prophetic signifi-

cance, but a Christian beauty also; it embodies the doctrine of sacrifice not only in Christ the Head but in us the members.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 19.

Chap. xxii., vers. 7, 8.

ABRAHAM was not picked out as a model of excellence. He was apt to fear, apt to lie. What he was apart from his Teacher we see in his journey to Egypt: a very poor, paltry earthworm indeed, one not to be despised by us, because we are earthworms also, but assuredly worthy of no reverence which was his by birth or which became his merely in virtue of his call. What he was when he was walking in the light, when that transfigured him from an earthworm into a man, his after history will help us to understand.

I. The thought may have struck our minds that the circumstances of Abraham were eminently favourable to the cultivation in him of a pure, simple, monotheistic faith. A man living under the eye of Nature—on open plains, amidst flocks and herds—was likely, it may be said, to preserve his devotion unsullied and to give it a healthy direction. But we must remember that there was nothing in the perpetual beholding of natural objects which could preserve him from the worship of those objects. You cannot, by considerations of this kind, escape from the acknowledgment of a distinct call from an actual, personal, unseen Being, addressed to the man himself and confessed by him in his inmost heart and conscience. But if you begin from the belief of such a call, the more you reflect upon Abraham's outward position the better. His work was the image of a Divine work; his government over the sheepfold, and still more in the tent, was the image of the Divine government of the world.

II. This we shall find is quite as important a reflection with a view to Abraham's personal character as it is with a view to his position and office as a patriarch. His faith carried him out of himself; it made him partaker of the righteousness of Him in whom he believed. He became righteous in proportion as he looked forward to that which was beyond himself, and as his own life was identified with the life of his family.

III. Abraham's intercession. Abraham believed God to be a righteous Being, not a mere sovereign who does what he likes. On that foundation his intercession is built. It is man beseeching that right may prevail, that it may prevail among

men,—by destruction if that must be, by the infusion of a new life if it is possible. It is man asking that the gracious order of God may be victorious over the disorder which His rebellious creatures have striven to establish in His universe.

IV. As the life of the family is inseparably involved with the life of the individual, the most awful experience in the personal being of the patriarch relates to the child of promise —the child of laughter and joy. If we take the story as it stands, we shall believe that God did tempt Abraham—as He had been all his life tempting him—in order to call into life that which would else have been dead, in order to teach him truths which he would else have been ignorant of. God did not intend that a man should be called upon to make a sacrifice without feeling that in that act he was in the truest sense the image of his Maker. A filial sacrifice was the only foundation on which the hearts of men, the societies of earth, the kingdom of heaven, could rest.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 83.

REFERENCES: xxii. 8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 98. xxii. 9.—Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 172. xxii. 9, 10.—Ed. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, 2nd series, p. 163.

Chap. xxii., ver. 10.—"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

A TEMPTATION had come upon Abraham; he thought that it was the right thing to do, and that he was called to do it; so after brooding over it intensely for several days, he was irresistibly drawn to take the knife for the purpose of slaying his son.

I. Since the child of promise had been born to him, his natural tendency had been to repose on Isaac rather than on God. After a while he would awake to the troubled consciousness that it was not with him as in other days; that he had sunk from the serene summit on which he once stood. Brooding thus from day to day he came to feel as if a voice were calling him to prove himself by voluntarily *renouncing* the son that had been given him. He was driven wild, fevered into madness, through the fervour of his desire to maintain trust in the great Father, even as now men sometimes are by the lurid burning of distrust.

II. But did not *God* tempt him? you say. Is it not so recorded? Yes, undoubtedly; in the Patriarch's mind it *was* God tempting him. The narrative is a narrative of what took

place in his mind; the whole is a subjective scene, portrayed objectively. The old Canaanite practice of offering human sacrifices suggested to Abraham the cultivation and manifestation of trust by immolating his son.

III. Although God did not suggest the crime, yet He was in the trial—the trial of maintaining and fostering trust without allowing it to lead him by perversion into crime. He spoke at length to the heart of Abraham with irresistible force, bidding him stay his hand. The Lord could not contradict Himself in the Patriarch's breast, bidding him one day kill, and another day crying out "Thou shalt not kill"; and the historian means us to understand that the latter was the true voice of God, contradicting and prevailing against the voice that had been mistaken for His.

IV. We see God penetrating and disengaging the *grace* in Abraham which lay behind the wrongness. He divided between the true motive of the heart and the false conclusion of the weak brain. He notes and treasures every bit of good that blushes amidst our badness.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 213.

REFERENCE: *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 8

Chap. xxii., ver. 12.

I. THERE come times in human life when men must undergo a crucial test. A man can have but one trial in his lifetime; one great sorrow, beside which all other griefs dwindle into insignificance.

II. The crucial test can only take place in relation to that which we love and value most. The question here is, Do we so hold that which is dearest to us upon earth that we could surrender it at the Divine bidding?

III. Abraham's answer, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb," is the sum of all mediational history; it is the main discovery of love. After all, what has the world done but to find an altar? It formed the cross; it never could have found the Saviour.

IV. The narrative shows what God intends by His discipline of man. He did not require Isaac's life; He only required the entire subordination of Abraham's will.

PARKER, *The Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 265.

Chap. xxii., ver. 14.—"Jehovah-jireh."

FROM this passage we learn: (1) the lesson that God taught

Abraham that all souls and all beings are His, and that our greatest and dearest possessions are beneath His control and within His grasp. (2) We learn also a lesson of obedience. Abraham was called upon to make the greatest possible sacrifice, a sacrifice that seemed to clash with the instinct of reason, affection, and religion alike, and yet without a murmur he obeyed the command of God. (3) We learn, too, that for wise reasons God sometimes permits the trial of His people's faith—not to weaken, but to strengthen it, for He knows that if it be genuine, trial will have the same effect which the storm produces on the kingly oak, only rooting it more firmly in the soil. (4) We learn that God's provisions are ever equal to His people's wants. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

J. W. Atkinson, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 772.

I. Jehovah-Jireh—the Lord will provide for the body. Temporal blessings, no less than spiritual, come to us through the medium of the covenant of grace. (1) The Lord will provide food for the body. He will bring round the seasons without fail, and make corn to grow for the service of man. (2) The Lord will provide raiment for His people. For forty years in the wilderness, amid the wear and tear of journey and of battle, the raiment of the Israelites waxed not old, because Jehovah provided for them; and doth He not still remember His own? (3) The Lord will provide for His people protection. Many times are they delivered in a most wonderful way, and to the astonishment of the world.

II. Jehovah-Jireh—the Lord will provide for the soul. (1) Jehovah has provided a Lamb; in the gift of His Son we have the guarantee for the supply of every needed blessing. (2) The Lord will provide for you His Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit comes to us through the atonement of Christ, and the sufficiency of the Sacrifice entailed and implied the promise of the Spirit, so that He who hath provided the Lamb is confidently to be trusted for this also. (3) The Lord will provide for the soul an eternal home, as is clear from that word, "I go to prepare a place for you." When the toils of life's pilgrimage are over, there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

J. Thain Davidson, *Sermon Preached in Montrose*, Nov. 19th, 1856.

References: xxii. 14.—S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 159; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1803; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 346. xxii. 16-18.—E. H. Gifford, *Voices of the Prophets*,

p. 131. xxii. 18.—S. Leathes, *Bampton Lecture*, 1874, p. 49; *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. viii., p. 200; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 10; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 140. xxii. 20-24.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 383. xxii.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 3; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 53; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 364. xxiii. 1, 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 182. xxiii. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 86. xxiii. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 102. xxiii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 62; Parker, vol. i., p. 240; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 388.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 16.—"Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."

I. On Mount Moriah we find Abraham doing God's will; here we find him suffering it.

II Look at Abraham buying a grave; the best man of his age here bargains for burial ground. Ponder well this transaction, and consider that in return for four hundred pieces of silver Abraham gets a burying-place.

III. The behaviour of the children of Heth calls for appreciative notice. They treated Abraham with generous pity and helpfulness.

IV. Man's final requirement of man is a grave. In the grave there is no repentance; the dead man cannot obliterate the past.

V. Abraham mourned for Sarah. Consecration to God's purpose does not eradicate our deep human love; say, rather, that it heightens, refines, sanctifies it.

PARKER, *The Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 271.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 19.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 139. xxiv.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 401; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 68; W. H. Burton, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 834; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 23. xxiv. 1.—G. Woolnough, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 366. xxiv. 12.—C. J. Vaughan, *Good Words*, 1864, p. 485.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 23.—"Whose daughter art thou?"

Just as the relationships of life are natural in themselves, so all the attitudes becoming them and the duties belonging to them should be naturally sustained.

I. There are two springs—one pure, the other tainted—out of which a strained and artificial deportment under such relations may arise. The one is a sense of duty, the other a habit of affectation. The obedience of sonship or daughtership which is

yielded *merely* from a sense of duty is an obedience that has lost its charm. The obedience which springs from affectation is a dangerous burlesque of a beautiful relationship. A loving daughter in a house is like a light shining in it—like starlight to its night and sunbeam to its day. Given a genuine and true-hearted love, and an unselfish devotion, the service and the duty will not be deficient, nor will there be failure to sustain and adorn the filial bond.

II. There is one element and influence only which can make the service perfect. The baptism of a simple Christianity alone can elicit filial growth in all its beauty. The fibre which has twined round the cross of Christ will twine most closely round a parent's heart.

A. MURSELL, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 195.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 27.—J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 53; W. M. Taylor, *The Christian at Work*, Dec. 18th, 1879. xxiv. 31.—A. B. Grosart, *Congregationalist*, vol. ii., p. 265. xxiv. 55.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 772.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 58.—"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."

MANY Christians believe the great end and aim of life is that they may obtain salvation. But God never created us merely that we might be saved. Had that been His object, He would have answered His purpose best by placing us beyond the reach of moral evil. God calls us to prepare for the bridal union of eternity. In one sense we are united to Christ now, because His Spirit dwells in us. But by the long discipline of life our will is subjugated and brought into conformity with the Divine will, so that God's will and man's will become identified; and out of the two there is made one in the bridal union of eternity.

I. What is the first condition of discipleship if we are called to be the Bride of the Lamb? We are called to leave all and follow Christ. Rebekah knew nothing of Isaac, except what Eliezer told her; she had to judge of his position and wealth by the steward's testimony. It seemed a great deal to ask, that she should leave home and friends and give herself over to a stranger. Yet she went, and she never regretted her choice.

II. A great deal had to be given up by Rebekah, and a great deal will have to be given up by us. She had to leave her nearest and dearest friends; we may have to make no less real a sacrifice.

III. As Eliezer encouraged Rebekah by giving her the jewels from Isaac, so God encourages us by the promises in His word.

IV. No time was lost in starting. Laban suggested a delay of ten days, but Eliezer said, "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way." Rebekah was no stranger to woman's weakness, but she would not risk delay, and when the question is put, the answer is decisive, "I will go."

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 51.

Chap. xxiv., ver 63.—"Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide."

Meditating was the same to Isaac that it is to us. Under all skies, in all times, thought has flowed in the same channel and observed the same laws. It is those who love to meditate that are most open to impressions from nature. It is the open eye before which the vision passes. Notice:

I. The man who meditates. Isaac's meditations would be very different from those of a more stirring, energetic character; above all, very different from those of a mere secular man. A man's meditations are the pure outcome of what he is. The word itself is suggestive. It means to be in the midst of a matter, to have it in your very centre. Do not be afraid of losing yourself in meditation. The more you lose yourself in great themes the better. The dream is the way to reality, but let it be reality and impression and abiding results that you are seeking. The Hebrew word here rendered meditate means also *to pray*. The meditation of a devout spirit on almost anything will soon run into prayer.

II. Meditation and nature. Isaac went out to the field to meditate. The variety of nature draws us out. We all tend to make self a prison, and this leading us out of ourselves is perhaps the main benefit of nature. Nature takes down our prison walls. The twitter of a bird in a bush can emancipate us. Nature whispers of the supernatural, and the fleeting preaches the eternal.

III. Meditation and time. Isaac meditated in the evening. The evening is the darling hour of meditation. The quiet gloaming, with its glamour and mystery, its long shadows and dying light, whispers into the heart of man. Meditation is the twilight of thought. Its region lies between this world and the next, between definite ideas and dimmest yearnings. No

one ever loved Christ deeply—no one ever was strong or high or pure or deep in any way without meditation.

J. Leckie, *Sermons Preached at Ibrox*, p. 304.

References: xxiv. 63.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 267; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 228; W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 61. xxiv. 66.—Parker, vol. i., p. 246. xxiv. 67.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 428; Bishop Thorold, *The Yoke of Christ*, p. 247; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 310. xxiv.—T. Guthrie, *Studies of Character from the Old Testament*, p. 61.

Chap. xxv. (with Heb. xii. 16, 17).—"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, etc."

The chief use, apparently, of some men's lives is that they may serve as beacons, warning off those who come after them from quicksand or whirlpool. They flame amidst the track to bid us beware. Such use the apostle found in the story of Esau: he holds it up before the eyes of the wavering Hebrew Christians, to urge them back from the gulf of apostasy towards which they were inclining.

I. But the apostle says, "fornicator and profane person"; and is there not something of invective here? are the epithets really applicable to the man's behaviour? Notice (1) the term fornicator was applied, according to Jewish custom, to religious unfaithfulness or apostasy. Thus the Israelites incurred it at the mouth of their prophets whenever they forsook the worship of Jehovah to serve other gods. The son of Isaac was guilty of throwing away heedlessly, for a meal, a most sacred thing, that should have been dearer to him than his life; and this is the guilt which the apostle charges upon him in the word which he employs. (2) The force of the second word is pretty much the same. Our English "profane" is just "outside the fane," "without a temple." A profane man is a person who has nothing which he worships, to whom nothing is holy or worth guarding, in whom there is no tender awe, no pious delicacy of feeling, who can play lightly with what is solemn and scorn what claims to be revered. Esau, in bartering his birthright to feed his hunger, acted profanely, squandering, despising a sacred possession of which he should have been incapable of *thinking* as marketable, which he should have cherished and set apart like a sanctuary.

II. In Esau's vain cry after the birthright at his father's bedside we have a picture of the irrevocable in life: of

things done which no tempest of weeping can undo; of the awaking to the worth and sweetness of things that have been slighted, when it is impossible to have them ever within our reach again, wail and agonise for them as we may. It is not merely difficulties we create by our follies; like Esau we create also lamentable *impossibilities*, spilling what can be gathered up no more. "*Afterward*," when he would have inherited the blessing that had been slighted, he was rejected.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 139.

REFERENCES: xxv.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 71; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 421. xxv. 1-10.—*Ibid.* p. 416.

Chap. xxv., vers. 7-11.—"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life, etc."

I. THE expression "a good old age" is only used of three individuals in the Scripture—Abraham, Gideon, and David. It forms the epitaph recorded by the Spirit on their tombs. By the expression "an old man, and *full* of years" we are to understand the satisfaction which the patriarch felt in exchanging this mortal life for a better. On the expression "he was gathered to his people," Calvin remarks that these words contain an intimation of the immortality of the soul. They imply, he says, that there is a society of men in death as well as in life. But the words "he was gathered to his people" are not to be restricted to the condition of *believers* after death. When the wicked die, they also are gathered to their people, to those who are of like feelings to themselves.

II. The next point in the narrative is the interment of Abraham. "His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him." This is the only passage from which we can learn that there was any communication between Isaac and Ishmael. Death brings those together who know not how to associate on any other occasion. Notice these points: (1) Abraham owed everything he was and everything he possessed to the grace of God. (2) When the Divine call came to Abraham, he manifested a very strong desire to make his kindred partakers of the blessing which he was to partake of. (3) Much happened to Abraham in the course of his sojourning calculated to render the Divine promises very doubtful to him. (4) Abraham was favoured with communications from on high which of themselves were sufficient to dignify him and to separate him from the whole generation in which he lived.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 96.

Chap. xxv., ver. 8.—"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."

"FULL of years" is not a mere synonym for longevity. The expression is by no means a usual one. It is applied to Isaac at the close of his calm, contemplative life, to David at the end of his stormy and adventurous career, to the high priest Jehoiada, and to the patriarch Job. We shall understand its meaning better if, instead of "full of years," we read "*satisfied* with years." The words point to a calm close, with all desires granted, with hot wishes stilled, and a willingness to let life go, because all which it could give had been attained.

We have two main things to consider. I. The tranquil close of a life. (1) It is possible, at the close of life, to feel that it has satisfied our wishes. Abraham had had a richly varied life. It had brought him all he wished. Satisfied, yet not sickened, keenly appreciating all the good and pleasantness of life, and yet quite willing to let it go, Abraham died. (2) It is possible at the end of life to feel that it is complete, because the days have accomplished for us the highest purpose of life. (3) It is possible, at the end of life, to be willing to go as satisfied.

II. Consider the glimpse of the joyful society beyond, which is given us in that other remarkable expression of the text, "He was gathered to his people." The words contain a dim intimation of something beyond this present life: (1) Dimly, vaguely, but unmistakably, there is here expressed a premonition and feeling after the thought of an immortal self in Abraham, which was not in the cave at Machpelah, but was somewhere else, and was for ever. (2) Abraham had been an exile all his life; but now his true social life is begun. He dwells with his own tribe; he is at home; he is in the city. (3) The expression suggests that in the future men shall be associated according to affinity and character.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 117.

REFERENCES: xxv. 8.—Parker, vol. i., p. 249; C. J. Vaughan, *Good Words* (1864), p. 548; R. Littlehales, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 376. xxv. 8, 9.—J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 3. xxv. 9.—Parker, vol. i., p. 362. xxv. 11.—D. G. Watt, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 302; G. Woolnough, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 380; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 48. xxv. 19-28.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 435. xxv. 19-34.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 43 xxv. 19—xlv.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 181 xxv. 23-34.—J. Wells, *Bible Children*, p. 29.

Chap. xxv., ver. 27.—"And Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field."

Esau was a huntsman. He belonged to the open air; he loved wild sports, and delighted to chase the wild beasts of the wilderness. Jacob, on the other hand, was more quiet, more self-restrained. There was a good deal of the underhanded and scheming about him—a prudent, sharp dealer—a typical Jew, who represented the mercantile spirit of the race. We see Esau strong, stalwart, impulsive, everything which we like about a man, and he occupies a large place in our hearts, and then passes away from us, a striking and solemn lesson.

I. He was a man of strong physical nature, a man of passion with little self-restraint. He is hungry, and he parts with his birthright. He goes into the desert and meets the daughters of the Hittites, and is led by them into entanglements which break up his relations at home. It is not the strongest physical natures which have always the greatest moral force.

II. He was a man of swift impulse. Impulsive men sometimes gain their ends with startling and complete effect. Impulse may achieve much, but it is not to be compared to the patient, quiet perseverance that sees its end and goes on to it till the victory is gained.

III. He was a man reckless of consequences. The present, the immediate, arrests him. There is a want of keen perceptive power about men of Esau's type. There is no purpose in their lives; they are tossed about like a barque without a helm, and their end will be shipwreck, and not a gallant entrance into haven.

IV. Esau had no sense of spiritual things. He was a man altogether nobler in character than Jacob, more generous, more forgetful of self; yet Jacob had a sense of spiritual things which Esau lacked. There was a Divine culture in Jacob which we do not find in Esau. Esau ended, as he began, a splendid, but a merely natural man; Jacob developed by God's grace into Israel, the Prince with God.

L. D. Bevan, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 574.

I. Esau was full of healthy vigour and the spirit of adventure, exulting in field sports, active, muscular, with the rough aspect and the bounding pulse of the free desert. Jacob was a harmless shepherd, pensive and tranquil, dwelling by the hearth and caring only for quiet occupations. Strength and speed and courage and endurance are blessings not

lightly to be despised; but he who confines his ideal to them, as Esau did, chooses a low ideal, and one which can bring a man but little peace at the last. Esau reaches but half the blessing of a man, and that the meaner and temporal half; the other half seems seldom or never to have entered his thoughts.

II. So side by side the boys grew up; and the next memorable scene of their history shows us that the great peril of animal life—the peril lest it should forget God altogether and merge into mere uncontrolled, intemperate sensuality—had happened to Esau! For the mess of pottage the sensual hunter sells in one moment the prophecy of the far future and the blessing of a thousand years. Esau's epitaph is the epitaph of a lifetime recording for ever the consummated carelessness of a moment. Esau, "a profane person," "who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." Jacob, with all the contemptible faults which lay on the surface of his character, had deep within his soul the faith in the unseen, the sense of dependence on and love to God which Esau did not even comprehend. (1) Cultivate the whole of the nature which God has given you, and in doing so remember that the mind is of more moment than the body, and the soul than both. (2) Beware lest, in a moment of weakness and folly, you sell your birthright and barter your happy innocence for torment and fear and shame.

F. W. FARRAR, *The Fall of Man and other Sermons*, p. 228.

REFERENCES: xxv. 27.—F. Langbridge, *Sunday Magazine* (1885), p. 673. xxv. 27-34.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 345; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 441; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 527; S. Leathes, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 129; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 75.

Chap. xxv., vers. 29-34.

THE story of the birthright shows us what kind of a man Esau was: hasty, careless, fond of the good things of this life. He had no reason to complain if he lost his birthright. He did not care for it, and so he had thrown it away. The day came when he wanted his birthright, and could not have it, and found no place for repentance—that is, no chance of undoing what he had done—though he sought it carefully with tears. He had sown, and he must reap. He had made his bed, and he must lie on it. And so must Jacob in his turn.

I. It is natural to pity Esau, but we have no right to do more; we have no right to fancy for a moment that God was arbitrary or hard upon him. Esau is not the sort of man

to be the father of a great nation, or of anything else great. Greedy, passionate, reckless people like him, without due feeling of religion or the unseen world, are not the men to govern the world or help it forward. It is men like Jacob whom God chooses—men who can look forward and live by faith, and form plans for the future, and carry them out against disappointment and difficulty till they succeed.

II. God rewarded Jacob's faith by giving him more light; by not leaving him to himself and his own darkness and meanness, but opening his eyes to understand the wondrous things of God's law, and showing him how God's law is everlasting, righteous, not to be escaped by any man; how every action brings forth its appointed fruit; how those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind.

III. It is the steady, prudent, God-fearing ones, who will prosper on the earth, and not poor, wild, hot-headed Esau. But those who give way to meanness, covetousness, falsehood, as Jacob did, will repent it; the Lord will enter into judgment with them quickly. There is not one law for the believer and another for the unbeliever; but whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap, and receive the due reward of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil.

C. KINGSLEY, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 72.

REFERENCES: xxv. 29-34.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls* (1880), p. 110; G. Salmon, *The Reign of Law*, p. 152.

Chap. xxv., ver. 34.—"Thus Esau despised his birthright."

IN forfeiting his birthright to his younger brother, Esau gave up (1) the right of priesthood inherent in the eldest line of the patriarch's family; (2) the promise of the inheritance of the Holy Land; (3) the promise that in his race and of his blood Messiah should be born. Esau parted with all because, as he said in the rough, unreflective commonplace strain which marks persons of his character even now, and which they mistake for common sense, "he did not see the good of it all." "What good shall this birthright do me?"

I. In matters of knowledge we find men despising their birthright. Knowledge is power; but as the maxim is used now, it is utterly vulgarising. Knowledge not loved for itself is not loved at all. It may bring power, but it brings neither peace nor elevation to the man who has won it. If we cultivate knowledge for the sake of worldly advantage, what are we doing but bidding farewell to all that is lasting or

spiritual in knowledge and wisdom, and taking in exchange for it a daily meal?

II. Again, as citizens, men despise their birthright. If, when it is given them to choose their rulers, they deliberately set aside thinkers; if they laugh at and despise the corrupt motives which affect the choice of rulers, and yet take no serious steps to render corrupt motives impotent—then there is a real denial and abnegation of citizens to act on the highest grounds of citizenship.

III. We are in daily danger of selling our birthright in religion. Esau's birthright was a poor shadow to ours. Esau had priesthood; we are called to be priests of a yet higher order. Esau had earthly promises; so have we. Esau had the promise of Messiah; we have the knowledge of Messiah Himself.

IV. The lost birthright is the one thing that is irretrievable. Neither good nor bad men consent that a forfeited birthright should be restored.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 190.

ESAU repeats here, as we all of us repeat, the history of the fall. Man's first sin was despising his birthright. The fruit of the tree was Eve's mess of pottage; the friendship, the Fatherhood of God, was the birthright which she despised.

I. What is a birthright? Briefly, it is that which combines high honour with sacred duty; it confers dignity and power, but it demands self-abnegation and unselfish work. Each of us is born with a birthright. God's infinite realm is large enough to confer on each one of us a title, and to demand in return a correspondent duty and work. The prize we strive for and have a right to strive for is the wealth of the universe through eternity.

II. What is it to despise a birthright? Esau despised his birthright by holding it cheaper than life. All shrinking from the pain and sacrifice which are ever found in the path of duty is a despising of the birthright, a counting ourselves unworthy of the place in the mansion which God has made us to occupy.

III. The inevitable fruit: the brand of reprobate. Esau was rejected as "under proof." God sought a son: He found a slave; He marked him, like Cain, and sent him away. The birthright which we despise as a possession will haunt us as

an avenger, and will anticipate upon earth the gloom of the second and utter death.

J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 88.

References: xxv. 34.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 348; S. Wilberforce, *Oxford Lent Sermons*, No. 5; W. Bull, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 100; C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, p. 183; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year* (*Lent to Passiontide*), p. 104; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 77; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 451.

Chap. xxvi., vers. 20-22, 33.

These four names are the names of four wells of springing water, dug in a valley, to feed families and flocks. Esek means strife; Sitnah, hatred; Rehoboth, room; and Shebah, oath. Have you not been at them all?

I. When you began life you found people trying to put you down by saying that the well was theirs, and that you were crowding yourself upon their grounds. If they did not try to put you down, you tried to put them down. The well is there in life,—strife, contention, debate,—you must find it in your life somewhere.

II. If you drive people off the ground, they may strive with you no more. They will hate you: your name will be the signal for abuse. First you are opposed, then you are hated, so you call it Sitnah—hatred—the second well. Human nature is so far astray that it tends to hatred in all men's lives; they either receive it or give it: it is human nature, and human nature cannot permanently conceal itself.

III. Then you come to the third stage, if you are not killed. Some find a grave at Esek, others die at Sitnah, and are buried beside the waters of hatred. But perhaps you have heavenly elements enough to get beyond the second stage. You are hated, but you keep digging away, and at last room is made for you—room, Rehoboth. You are recognised, you are looked for, and missed if you do not come.

IV. If you have got to Rehoboth, is there anything to hinder you from going on? The next step is easy: confidence—rest. Be not discouraged: move on honestly, laboriously, religiously. Go on: that is your duty in two words. Life is full of difficulty. It is through tribulation that you get into any kingdom worth anything. In Christ we are called to strife. His words

are: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

PARKER, *The Fountain*, April 28th, 1881.

REFERENCE: xxvi. 17-33.—Parker, vol. i., p. 254.

Chap. xxvi., vers. 34, 35.—"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

I. ESAU was forty years old when he married. A sin is aggravated, sometimes, by the age of the sinner. Some men learn nothing by age: they are forty years old on the books of the registrar; they are no age at all in the books of wisdom.

II. Esau's wives were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah. Sin has consequences. Actions are not solitary and uninfluential; they have relations to other actions and to influences simply innumerable and incalculable.

III. A sin does not confine itself to one line of punishment. Esau went against the law of his country and his people in marrying Canaanitish women. What was the punishment? Endless, ubiquitous, complete: (1) Esau was alienated from his family; (2) he was a rebel against the laws of organised society; (3) he forfeited his hereditary rights.

The law of the land was: To marry a Canaanitish woman is to lose your primogeniture. Esau supplanted himself. Find out the roots and beginnings of things, and you will always discover that a man is his own supplanter, his own enemy.

PARKER, vol. i., p. 261.

REFERENCES: xxvii.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. viii., p. 67; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. i., p. 456; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 85; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 61; Parker, vol. i., p. 268. xxvii. 1-4.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 123. xxvii. 1-41.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 96. xxvii. 13.—E. Cooper, *Fifty two Family Sermons*, p. 247. xxvii. 28.—*New Manual of Sunday School Addresses*, p. 16.

Chap. xxvii., ver. 34.—"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father."

No one can read this chapter without feeling some pity for Esau. All his hopes were disappointed in a moment. He had built much upon this blessing, for in his youth he had sold his birthright, and he thought that in his father's blessing he would

get back his birthright, or what would stand in its place. He had parted with it easily, and he expected to regain it easily. He thought to regain God's blessing, not by fasting and prayer, but by savoury meat, by feasting and making merry.

I. Esau's cry is the cry of one who has rejected God, and who in turn has been rejected by Him. He was: (1) profane; and (2) presumptuous. He was profane in selling his birthright, presumptuous in claiming the blessing. Such as Esau was, such are too many Christians now. They neglect religion in their best days; they give up their birthright in exchange for what is sure to perish and make them perish with it. They are profane persons, for they despise the great gift of God; they are presumptuous, for they claim a blessing as a matter of course.

II. The prodigal son is an example of a true penitent. He came to God with deep confession—self-abasement. He said, "Father, I have sinned." Esau came for a son's privileges; the prodigal son came for a servant's drudgery. The one killed and dressed his venison with his own hand, and enjoyed it not; for the other the fatted calf was prepared, and the ring for his hand and shoes for his feet, and the best robe; and there was music and dancing.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Selection from Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 141; also vol. vi., p. 15.

REFERENCES: xxvii. 34.—Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 1; J. S. Bartlett, *Sermons*, p. 33. xxvii. 35.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 147.

Chap. xxvii., ver. 36.—"And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times."

JACOB is the typical Jew; he is the epitome of the character of the chosen people, who, again, are an epitome of the great human world. All the virtues, all the vices, all the strength and all the weakness, all the nobleness and all the baseness, of the people whom Jehovah loved and whom He took to be His own, meet in this patriarch's character and life.

I. Jacob was a man who could cheat and lie; he could lie roundly and cheat coolly when it suited his purpose; and he could carry on what would everywhere be esteemed sharp practice to a wonderfully successful issue. A man of deep schemes, of far sight, of silent vigilance, of untiring patience, and apparently not much troubled by questions so long as his schemes were justified by success. He was a man of cunning,

scheming, crafty nature, with some grand deep qualities beneath them all, which God's eye discerned, which His hand drew forth, and by a long stern discipline educated for Himself.

II. If we would know why God set a mark on him and made him, rather than his more shallow and splendid brother, the father of a great nation and a prince in His Church, we must note that he could believe and pray: (1) Jacob's faith was a power in his life; it became in the end a mighty power. Esau could live only for the moment, and found it hard to sink the present in the future; but Jacob could live and suffer for a day far distant, for a day whose light would never gladden him, but would shine upon his heirs. (2) Jacob could wrestle in prayer. No man can believe who cannot pray. The wrestling with the angel was the great crisis in Jacob's history. It is as though he rose that night into his higher, nobler life. Jacob, the supplanter, disappears, and Israel, the Prince with God, stands up in his room.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 97.

Chap. xxvii., ver. 38.—"And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept."

I. THE character of Esau has unquestionably a fair side. Esau was by no means a man of unqualified wickedness or baseness; judged according to the standard of many men, he would pass for a very worthy, estimable person. The whole history of his treatment of Jacob puts his character in a very favourable light: it represents him as an open-hearted, generous person, who, though he might be rough in his manners, fond of a wild life, perhaps as rude and unpolished in mind as he was in body, had yet a noble soul, which was able to do what little minds sometimes cannot do—namely, forgive freely a cruel wrong done to him.

II. Nevertheless it is not without reason that the apostle styles Esau a profane person. The defect in his character may be described as a want of religious seriousness; there was nothing spiritual in him—no reverence for holy things, no indications of a soul which could find no sufficient joy in this world, but which aspired to those joys which are at God's right hand for evermore. By the title of *profane* the apostle means to describe the carnal, unspiritual man—the man who takes his stand upon this world as the end of his thoughts and the scene

of all his activity, who considers the land as a great hunting field, and makes the satisfaction of his bodily wants and tastes the whole end of living.

III. Esau's repentance was consistent with his character; it was manifestly of the wrong kind. It was emphatically sorrow of *this world*, grief for the loss of the corn and wine. Jacob had taken his birthright—that he could have pardoned him; but it grieved Esau to his very soul that Jacob had gotten the promise of the world's wealth besides. He continued in heart unchanged, and so he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xxvii. 38.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 133; S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 54. xxvii. 41-46.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 1; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 79. xxvii.—Parker, vol. i., p. 268. xxviii. 1-15.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 1. xxviii. 10.—F. Langbridge, *Sunday Magazine*, 1885, p. 675.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 10-13.—"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran, etc."

IN his dream Jacob saw three things:

I. A way set up between earth and heaven, making a visible connection between the ground on which he slept and the sky.

II. The free circulation along that way of great powers and ministering influences.

III. He saw God, the supreme directing and inspiring force, eminent over all. From these we learn: (1) that every man's ladder should stand upon the ground: no man can be a Christian by separating himself from his kind; (2) along every man's ladder should be seen God's angels; (3) high above all a man's plans, high above all his heroic moral resolves, there is to be a living trust in God.

H. W. BEECHER, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 643.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 10-15.

I. CONSIDER the circumstances under which the vision here described was granted to Jacob. He had left his home and was suffering trial and hardship; he was a friendless and unprotected man.

II. Look at the nature of his vision. From this glimpse into the secrets of the unseen world, it appears: (1) that the angels

are interested in the well-being of God's people; (2) that heaven is a place of activity; (3) that there is a way of communication open between heaven and earth. This way represents the mediation of Christ.

III. Look at the promises which on this occasion were made to Jacob: (1) God promised to be with Jacob; (2) God promised His protection and guidance to Jacob; (3) God promised him final deliverance from all trouble.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 108.

I. GOD is near men when they little think it. He is near (1) when we are not aware of it; (2) when sin is fresh upon us; (3) when we are in urgent need of Him.

II. God is near men to engage in their religious training. (1) God assured Jacob of His abiding presence with him. (2) Jacob was taught to recognise God in all things. (3) He was taught to feel his entire dependence upon God throughout the journey of life.

III. God is always near men to effect their complete salvation. Intercourse has been established between earth and heaven; the whole process of man's salvation is under the superintendence of God.

D. RHYS JENKINS, *The Eternal Life*, p. 347.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 10-16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 98.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 10-17.

JACOB makes his brother's hunger an occasion for bargaining with him for his birthright. Esau says, "What profit shall this birthright do to me?" Neither one nor the other knew what good it would do. The vision of something to be realised now or hereafter dawned upon Jacob—a vision probably mixed with many sensual and selfish expectations, still of a good not tangible, a good which must come to him as a gift from God. The absence of all want, all discontent with the present and the visible, is the feeling which exhibits itself in the acts and utterances of Esau.

I. The vision at Bethel was the first step in Jacob's Divine education—the assurance which raised him to the feelings and dignity of a man. He knew that though he was to be chief of no hunting tribe, there might yet come forth from him a blessing to the whole earth.

II. Jacob's vision came to him in a dream. But that which had been revealed was a permanent reality, a fact to accompany him through all his after-existence. The great question we

have to ask ourselves is, Was this a *fact* for Jacob the Mesopotamian shepherd, and is it a phantasm for all ages to come? or was it a truth which Jacob was to learn that it might be declared to his seed after him, and that they might be acquainted with it as he was, but in a fuller and deeper sense? If we take the Bible for our guide we must accept the latter conclusion and not the former. The Son of Man is the ladder between earth and heaven, between the Father above and His children upon earth—which explains and reconciles all previous visions, and shows how angels and men can meet and hold converse with each other.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 100.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 10-18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 25. xxviii. 10-22.—S. A. Brooke, *Sermons*, 2nd series, pp. 231, 249; E. Irving, *Collected Works*, vol. iii., p. 500; Parker, vol. i., p. 274; *Sermons for Boys and Girls* (1880), p. 116; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 537; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 181.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 11-13.

I. THE ladder whose top reached to heaven while its base rested on the earth is the Son of Man who was also the Son of God. If we attempt to approach God otherwise than through the humanity of Christ, utter failure and disappointment shall be the end of our efforts. But the access which we could not ourselves obtain, God has provided in Christ. He is the ladder set up on the earth.

II. The ascending and descending angels represent the communications which, through His mediation, are constantly passing to and fro between God and man.

III. Our churches are our Bethels, where the eye of the mind is opened spiritually to discern the true Ladder and the innumerable company of angels who throng its shining stair.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 83.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 11-16.

SLEEPING to see. One may be too wide-awake to see. There are things which are hidden from us until we lie down to sleep. Only then do the heavens open and the angels of God disclose themselves.

I. It does not follow that God is not because we cannot discern Him, because we are not aware of Him. Little do we dream of the veiled wonders and splendours amidst which we move. To Jacob's mental fret and confusion, the wilderness

where God brooded was a wilderness and nothing more. But in sleep he grew tranquil and still; he lost himself—the flurried, heated, uneasy self that he had brought with him from Beersheba, and *while he slept* the hitherto unperceived Eternal came out softly, largely, above and around him. We learn from this the secret of the Lord's nearness.

II. No man is ever completely awake; *something* in him always sleeps. There is a sense in which it may be said with truth that were we less wakeful, more of God and spiritual realities might be unveiled to us. We are always *doing*—too much so for finest being; are always striving—too much so for highest attaining. Our religion consists too much in solicitude to *get*; it is continually "The Lord, the Father of *mercies*," rather than "The Lord, the Father of *glory*." We require to sleep *from ourselves* before the heavens can open upon us freely and richly flow around us.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 201.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 11-22.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 529.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 12.

I. JESUS, the Ladder, connects earth with heaven.

II. This ladder comes to sinners.

III. God is at the top, speaking kind words down the ladder.

IV. Advice to climbers: (1) Be sure to get the right ladder; there are plenty of shams. (2) Take firm hold; you will want both hands. (3) Don't look down or you will be giddy. (4) Don't come down to fetch any one else up. If your friends will not follow you, leave them behind.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 91.

I. THE ancient heathens told in their fables how the gods had all left the earth one by one; how one lingered in pity, loath to desert the once happy world; how even that one at last departed. Jacob's dream showed something better, truer than this; it showed him God above him, God's angels all about him.

II. The intercourse between God and man has been enlarged and made perpetual in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son.

III. When Jacob awoke he consecrated a pillar, and vowed to build a sanctuary there and give tithes. We cannot altogether commend the spirit in which he made his vow. He tried to make a good bargain with the Almighty; yet God accepted

him. The place was holy to him, because he knew that God was there.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 31.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 12.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 77; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 2nd series, p. 66; W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 86; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 53; Bishop Woodford, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 242. xxviii. 12-22.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 272; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 99. xxviii. 13.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 129.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 15.—"I will not leave thee, until I have done all that which I have spoken to thee of."

JACOB'S life began in moral confusion. There was no great moral flaw, such as we find in the life of David; but there was a want of perfect openness, frankness, generosity, in carrying out his aims. And yet, to such a soul, God in His goodness came—and came quietly—and comforted him with the assurance of His presence and of His love—nay, of His companionship and of His abundant blessing.

I. In what does the treasure of God's companionship consist? It consists: (1) in the consciousness of God's personality; (2) in the precious possessions He gives us—love, reason, conscience, will. To our conscience new light is given; to our love new spheres are open; our will receives new strength from the new example of His love and grace.

II. While these faculties are taken up the companionship of God becomes a reality of our daily life and our "exceeding great reward." And then, besides, and with all this, we have the consciousness of communion with the Incarnate Word—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"; we know what to do and where to find Him. In this life we are to walk by faith. Our capacities are not intended to be satisfied here, but they shall be satisfied hereafter.

BISHOP KING, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 193.

THERE are two very observable facts which may be gathered from the joint study of the Bible and our own hearts. The first is, that we are prone to distrust the promises of God though we know Him to be unchangeable; the second is, that God so condescends to our weakness that He reduplicates His pledges, in order, as it were, to compel us into confidence.

I. God speaks to His people of sin blotted out; He speaks of the thorough reconciliation which Christ has effected between Himself and the sinner; He speaks of His presence as

accompanying the pilgrim through the wilderness; of His grace as sufficient for every trial which may or can be encountered. The things of which God speaks to His people spread themselves through the whole of the unmeasured hereafter, and it must follow that the pledge of our not being left until the things spoken of are done is tantamount to an assurance that we shall never be left and never forsaken.

II. The text is thus a kind of mighty guarantee, giving such a force to every declaration of God, that nothing but an unbelief the most obstinate can find ground for doubt or perplexity. It does not stand by itself, but comes in as an auxiliary in declaring God's glorious intention. It is a provision against human faithlessness, words which may well be urged when a man is tempted with the thought that, after all, a thing spoken of is not a thing done, and which bid him throw from him the thought that God is not bound to perform whatever He has promised.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1921.

THESE words teach us: (1) that God has a plan or scheme of life for every one of us, and that His purposes embrace every part of that plan; (2) that no words of God about our life will be left unfulfilled; (3) that there is no unfinished life. The promise is a promise of presence, intercourse, and fellowship.

S. MARTIN, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 181.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1630.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 16.—"And Jacob said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not."

AT Bethel Jacob gained the knowledge for himself of the real presence of a personal God. He felt that he a person, he a true living being, he a reasonable soul, stood indeed before an infinite but still a true personal being—before the Lord Almighty. Then it was that the patriarch entered into the greatness of his calling, and felt for himself the true blessedness of his inheritance.

I. This living sense of God's presence with us is a leading feature of the character of all His saints under every dispensation. This is the purpose of all God's dealings with every child of Adam—to reveal Himself to them and in them. He kindles desires after Himself; He helps and strengthens the wayward will; He broods with a loving energy over the soul; He will save us if we will be saved. All God's saints learn how near He is to them, and they rejoice to learn it. They learn to

delight themselves in the Lord—He gives them their hearts' desire.

II. Notice, secondly, how this blessing is bestowed on us. For around us, as around David, only far more abundantly, are appointed outward means, whereby God intends to reveal Himself to the soul. This is the true character of every ordinance of the Church: all are living means of His appointment, whereby He reveals Himself to those who thirst after Him. We use these means aright when through them we seek after God. Their abuse consists either in carelessly neglecting these outward things or in prizing them for themselves and so resting in them, by which abuse they are turned into especial curses.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 66.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 401; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 548. xxviii. 16, 17.—J. B. Mozley, *Parochial and Occasional Sermons*, p. 28; W. F. Hook, *Sermons on Various Subjects*, p. 152; Archbishop Thomson, *Life in the Light of God's Word*, p. 143. xxviii. 16-22.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 10.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 17.—"How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

I. IT must have been the freshness of Jacob's sense of recent sin that made a spot so peaceful and so blessed seem to him a "dreadful" place. Everything takes its character from the conscience. Even a Bethel was awful, and the ladder of angels terrible, to a man who had just been deceiving his father and robbing his brother. The gates of our heaven are the places of our dread.

II. Strange and paradoxical as is this union of the sense of beauty, holiness, and fear, there are seasons in every man's life when it is the sign of a right state of mind. There is a shudder at sanctity which is a true mark of life. The danger of the want of reverence is far greater than the peril of its excess. Very few, in these light and levelling days, are too reverent The characteristic of the age is its absence.

III. Our churches stand among us to teach reverence. There are degrees of God's presence. He fills all space, but in certain spots He gives Himself or reveals Himself, and therefore we say He is there more than in other places. A church is such a place. To those who use it rightly it may be a "gate of heaven."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 81.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 18.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 169, and vol. vii., p 66. xxviii. 19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 108.

Chap. xxviii., vers. 20-22.—"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, etc., then shall the Lord be my God."

JACOB and Esau are very like men that we meet every day—commonplace, ordinary men, neither of them distinguished in character or ability. They were children of a weak father and of a crafty mother. Neither of them has any special religiousness. In the case of Esau the sensuous half of the man is all that could be desired, the spiritual half is altogether wanting. The natural half of Jacob's character is far less noble than that of Esau, but there were also in him certain religious susceptibilities—a religious imagination and sentiment and personal purity—which constituted the possibility of religious development. The difference between them is the difference between the good things in a bad man and the bad things in a good man, with their contrasted issues. Both of these youths began with the somewhat feeble religiousness of Isaac's tent. It took no hold upon Esau the profane, and he became Edom. It did take some hold upon Jacob the crafty, and he became Israel.

I. The night at Bethel was clearly a crisis in Jacob's religious character. He lay down a desolate, smitten, remorseful lad; the swift retribution of his sin had overtaken him. His vision was a revelation of the spiritual world and a teaching of the vital connection of God's providence with our human life. A wanderer of whom no human eye took cognisance, he was still under the eye of God; an exile for whom no one cared, God's angels ministered to him. Like Peter, his fall had been the means of his rising to a new spiritual life.

II. And then Jacob vowed his vow. It sounds somewhat carnal and bargain-making, but I do not think it was. Jacob simply takes up the words which God had spoken to him. They were the ideas of his day: he would be devout and benevolent, serve God and man according to his opportunity. He would offer to God all that he could offer. His history is a great parabolic lesson for young men—not in its details of wrong-doing and remorse, but in its departure from home, in the loneliness of a new life, and in its new sense of God and consecration to Him.

H. ALLON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 60.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 20-22.—W. Bull, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 100.

Chap. xxviii., etc.

I. IF there be little poetic or romantic charm in the history of Isaac, what a wealth of it there is in that of Jacob! A double

deceit, followed by banishment from his country; this expulsion relieved and brightened, first by a glorious vision and then by unexampled prosperity in the strange land whither he had gone; long toils, travails, disappointments, and quarrels; and, at last, light at eventime in Egypt, and the spirit of prophecy resting upon his soul. Jacob's love for Rachel is the most pleasing trait in his character, as the prophecy from his death-bed is the most sublime.

II. The story of Joseph has often and truly been called a romantic one, as marvellous as anything in the "Arabian Nights," and yet alive all over with truth and nature. It combines the charms of the most finished fiction and of the simplest truth. It is at once the strangest and the most likely of stories. The character of Joseph, so mild, yet so determined, so wise and so affectionate, yet so astute and pious, develops before you as naturally as a bud into a flower or a slip into a tree. The subordinate characters in this drama of life are all drawn by brief but most powerful strokes, from the wife of Potiphar with her mock cry, to the chief butler with his tardy admission, "I do remember my faults this day"; from the kindness of Reuben to the cruelty of Simeon; from the tenderness of Benjamin to the pleading eloquence of the repentant Judah.

III. From the history of Jacob and Joseph we may gather these additional thoughts. (1) Let us learn to admire even the eddies of life, and to respect even the weaker members of the Church of God (Isaac). (2) Sometimes, though seldom, policy and piety are found in the same character (Jacob). (3) Let us rejoice that, even in this world of dull injustice and leaden law, there are again and again opened up to aspiring spirits sudden opportunities of rising, like Jacob's ladder stretched along the sky. (4) Let us remember that we, too, in our turn, must be gathered, like the patriarchs, to our fathers.

G. GILFILLAN, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 21.

REFERENCES: xxviii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 101; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; Old Testament Outlines*, pp. 13, 16, 18; Wells, *Bible Children*, p. 43. xxix.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vi., p. 267; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 110; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., pp. 17, 28, 36. xxix. 20.—W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 142. xxix. 26.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 321. xxix.-xxxi.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 539; Parker, vol. i., p. 280.

Chap. xxx., ver. 27.—"I have learned by experience."

THE words are Laban's, and taken in their connection they

intimate that even an utterly worldly man, such as he was, may be forced to acknowledge the moral providence of God, whereby He takes especial and peculiar care of His servants. Look at the moral and religious lessons which a thoughtful man may learn by experience.

I. We learn by experience much that is wholesome about ourselves. By the blunders we have made, the falls we have suffered, the injuries we have sustained, the sins we have committed, and the wrongs we have inflicted on others, God has enlightened us in the knowledge of ourselves, and made us feel that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

II. Experience has taught us much regarding the world and its pleasures, possessions, and enjoyments. Even in the case of the Christian, there is much to wean him from the world as the years roll on. As he grows older the world becomes less and less to him, and Christ becomes more and more. He learns to delight in God, and his growth in holiness becomes the ambition of his life.

III. The experience of the lapse of years teaches us more and more of God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have increasing proofs of God's wisdom and God's faithfulness. Whoever has been false to us, He has remained true. This testimony of experience thus grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength. It is a fortress which is utterly impregnable.

W. M. TAYLOR, *The Christian at Work*, Sept. 16th, 1880.

REFERENCES: xxx. 1-26.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 36. xxx. 27.—Parker, vol. i., p. 362; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 278. xxx. 27-43.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 46. xxx.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vi., p. 267; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 16. xxxi.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., pp. 16, 53. xxxi. 3, 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1630. xxxi. 13.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 360; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1267; J. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 175. xxxi. 38.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 530. xxxi. 47.—Parker, vol. i., p. 362. xxxi. 48, 49.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 549. xxxi. 48-50.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 113. xxxi. 53.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 352.

Chap. xxxii., vers. 1, 2.—"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

I. NOTICE first the angels themselves. (1) Their number is very great. (2) They are swift as the flames of fire. (3) They are

also strong: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength." (4) They seem to be all young. (5) They are evidently endowed with corresponding moral excellences.

II. The ministry of angels has these characteristics. (1) It is a ministry of guardianship. (2) It is a ministry of cheerfulness. (3) It is a ministry of animation. (4) It is a ministry of consolation. (5) It is a ministry of fellowship and convoy through death to life and from earth to heaven.

III. The whole subject shows in a very striking manner (1) the exceeding greatness of the glory of Christ; (2) the value and greatness of salvation.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting-places*, p. 182.

JACOB called the name of that place Mahanaim (*i.e.*, two camps). One camp was the little one containing his women and children and his frightened and defenceless self, and the other was the great one up there, or rather in shadowy but most real spiritual presence round about him as a body-guard, making an impregnable wall between him and every foe. We may take some plain lessons from the story.

I. The angels of God meet us on the dusty road of common life. "Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him."

II. God's angels meet us punctually at the hour of need.

III. The angels of God come in the shape which we need. Jacob's want was protection; therefore the angels appear in warlike guise, and present before the defenceless man another camp. God's gifts to us change their character; as the Rabbis fabled that the manna tasted to each man what each most desired. In that great fulness each of us may have the thing we need.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 195.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 1.—S. Baring-Gould, *Preacher's Pocket*, p. 1. xxxii 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1544. xxxii. 1-32.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 101.

Chap. xxxii., vers. 1, 24.

EVERY man lives two lives—an outward and an inward. The one is that denoted in the former text: *Jacob went on his way.* The other is denoted in the latter text: *Jacob was left alone.* In either state God dealt with him.

I. The angels of God met him. We do not know in what form they appeared, or by what sign Jacob recognised them.

In its simplicity the angelic office is a doctrine of revelation. There exists even now a society and a fellowship between the sinless and the fallen. As man goes on his way, the angels of God meet him.

II. Are there any special ways in which we may recognise and use this sympathy? (1) The angelic office is sometimes discharged in human form. We may entertain angels unawares. Let us count common life a ministry; let us be on the look-out for angels. (2) We must exercise a vigorous self-control lest we harm or tempt. Our Saviour has warned us of the presence of the angels as a reason for not offending His little ones. *Their angels* He calls them, as though to express the closeness of the tie that binds together the unfallen and the struggling. We may gather from the story two practical lessons. (*a*) The day and the night mutually act and react. A day of meeting with angels may well be followed by a night of wrestling with God. (*b*) Earnestness is the condition of success. Jacob had to wrestle a whole night for his change of name, for his knowledge of God. Never will you say, from the world that shall be, that you laboured here too long or too earnestly to win it.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Last Words at Doncaster*, p. 197.

REFERENCE: xxxii. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 90.

Chap. xxxii., vers. 7, 11, 24, 28.—"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And Jacob said, ... Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, etc."

FROM this description of a day and a night in the life of Jacob we learn three things. (1) This is a crisis, a turning-point in his career. His experience at the ford of Jabbok is his "conversion" from the craft and cunning and vulturous greed of years to the sweet subjection of his will to the Eternal, and consequent victory over himself and his brother. (2) God is in this crisis from first to last and at every moment of these twenty-four hours. (3) The crisis closes in the victory of the patient and loving Lord over the resisting selfishness of Jacob. Note these points:—

I. It must have been a welcome fore-gleam of approaching victory, and a pledge of the sustaining presence of Jehovah in the "valley of the shadow of death," that as this day of crisis broke on the pilgrim the angels of God met him.

II. What is the significance of this terrific conflict? It means this assuredly. Jacob having gone to God in quaking

fear, God holds him and will not let him go; goads and harrows his soul, till his heart swells and is ready to break; urges him to such a relentless and soul-consuming struggle with his self-will that he feels as though he is held in the grip of a giant and cannot escape. He resists, he struggles, he writhes, and in his furious contortions is at last lamed and helpless, and therefore compelled to trust himself and his all to God.

III. Jacob wrestled *against* God, but at last yielding, his soul is suffused with the blessedness of the man whose trust is in the Lord. Faber asks, with mingled beauty and force, "What is it will make us real?" and answers, "The face of God will do it." It is so. Israel is a new creation: Jacob is dead. Dark as the night was, Jacob passed through it, saw the Face of God at day-dawn, and became himself, met his brother with serenity, and spent the rest of his days in the love and service of God.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 39.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 7, 8.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 204. xxxii. 9-11.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls* (1880), p. 122. xxxii. 9-12.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 186.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 10.—"Now I am become two bands."

I. THE contrast here presented between the early loneliness and poverty of life and its growing riches is universal.

(1) What is life but a constant gathering of riches? Compare the man and the woman of forty with their childhood. They have made themselves a name and a place in life; they are centres of attraction to troops of friends. How rich has life become to them! how full its storehouses of knowledge, power, and love! (2) That which is stored in the mind, that which is stored in the heart, is the true treasure; the rest is mere surplusage. To know and to love: these are the directions in which to seek our riches. (3) There is no other way to make life a progress, but to root it in God.

II. Consider the higher development of the law of increase, the deeper and more solemn sense in which, through the ministry of the angel of death, we become "two bands." (1) Through death there has been a constant progress in the forms and aspects of creation. The huge, coarse, unwieldy types which ruled of old in both the animal and vegetable worlds have vanished, and out of their ashes the young phœnix of creation has sprung which is the meet satellite of

man. (2) This is the counsel of God: to make the darkness of death beautiful for us; to make it the one way home; to show us that the progress is not rounded, but prolonged and completed, and that the increase is not gathered, but consecrated by death as the possession of eternity. To bring heaven easily within our reach God separates the bands,—part have crossed the flood, part are on the hither side, and the instinct of both tells them that they are one. At the last great day of God they shall be one band once more, met again and met for ever.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Aids to the Development of the Divine Life*, No. VII.

"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant."

THANKFULNESS is eminently a Christian grace, and is enjoined on us in the New Testament. Jacob knew not of those great and wonderful acts of love with which God has visited the race of men since his day. But he knew that Almighty God had shown him great mercies and great truth.

I. Jacob's distinguishing grace was a habit of affectionate musing upon God's providence towards him in times past and of overflowing thankfulness for it. Abraham appears ever to have been looking forward in hope—Jacob looking back in memory; the one rejoicing in the future, the other in the past; the one making his way towards the promises, the other musing over their fulfilment. Abraham was a hero; Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

II. It would be well for us if we had the character of mind instanced in Jacob and enjoined on his descendants,—the temper of dependence on God's providence and thankfulness under it and careful memory of all He has done for us. We are not our own, any more than what we possess is our own. We are God's property by creation, by redemption, by regeneration. It is our happiness thus to view the matter. We are creatures, and being such, we have two duties: to be resigned, and to be thankful.

III. Let us view God's providence towards us more religiously than we have hitherto done. Let us humbly and reverently attempt to trace His guiding hand in the years which we have already lived. He has not made us for nought; He has brought us thus far in order to bring us farther, in order to

bring us on to the end. We may cast all our care upon Him who careth for us.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Selection from Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 52; also vol. v., p. 72.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1787. xxxii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 109.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 24.—"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

THERE are two decisive and determining moments in the life of Jacob. The wrestling with the angel of the Lord was the second of these, even as that marvellous vision in the field of Luz had been the first. The work which that began, this completes.

I. In that "Let me go" of the angel, and that "I will not let thee go except thou bless me" of Jacob, we have a glimpse into the very heart and deepest mystery of prayer,—man conquering God, God suffering Himself to be conquered by man. The power which prevails with Him is a power which has itself gone forth from Him. Not in his natural strength shall man prevail with God,—at the lightest touch of His hand all this comes to nothing,—but in the power of faith; and the after-halting of Jacob, so far from representing his loss, did rather represent his gain. There was in this the outward token of an inward strength which he had won therein, of a breaking in him of the power of the flesh and of the fleshly mind; while the further fact that he halted not merely then, but from that day forth, was a testimony that this was no gain made merely for the moment, from which he should presently fall back to a lower spiritual level again, but that he was permanently lifted up into a higher region of the spiritual life.

II. The new name does not, in the case of Jacob, abolish and extinguish the old, as for Abraham it does. The names Jacob and Israel subsist side by side, and neither in the subsequent history of his life wholly abolishes the other. In Abraham's name are incorporated and sealed the promises of God. These evermore abide the same. Israel, on the other hand, is the expression not of the promises of God, but of the faith of man. But this faith of man ebbs and flows, waxes and wanes. Jacob is not wholly Israel, Israel has not entirely swallowed up Jacob, during the present time; and in sign and witness to this the new name only partially supersedes and effaces the old.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 1.

I. In what position do we find Jacob's spiritual state up to the time of this second incident in his life? During the first period of his life he was simply a man of the world. After the vision at Bethel he was a religious man; the sense of religious influence was seen in his life; after the conflict at the ford Jabbok he became a spiritually minded man. He was going home with his sin yet weighty on his soul, unpardoned, unforgiven, uncleansed by the Divine power. Bethel was the house of God, to teach him that he could not set his foot upon a single acre of soil without finding that the Governor of the world was there; here we have the unfolding of the wider thought of the intercommunion and personal relationship between the soul of man and his Maker.

II. Those who trust in the God of Bethel and providence are looking to Him for what He gives; but the aspirations of the spiritual man are wholly different. At Bethel Jacob said, "If Thou wilt be with me and wilt do me good." At Jabbok his first thought was, "Tell me Thy name." He desired to know more of God, not to get more from God. To gain further spiritual experience—this is the thirst of the spiritual man. To make a friend of God for the good that we can get—this is the idea of the merely religious man.

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 608.

I. All the evidence here goes to prove that the wonderful wrestler, who contended with Jacob, was the one only true God.

II. Being God and being man, we are right in calling Him Christ, and in placing this incident as the second of the anticipatory advents of the Messiah which lie scattered over the Old Testament.

III. As Jacob wrestled with God in human form, so it is with God in the Lord Jesus Christ that in all our spiritual conflicts, in all our deep repentances, in all our struggling prayers, we must wrestle.

IV. There were two things which Christ gave in this encounter—a wound and a blessing. The wound first and then the blessing. The wound was small and for a season; the blessing was infinite and for ever.

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons* (1874), p. 235.

We see here the supernatural appearing in the world of the natural. We see God veiling Himself in human form, as He

veiled Himself in the form of Christ His Son in after years. We must look at this story of miracle in the light of the miracle of the Incarnation.

I. In this striving of the patriarch with God, and in the blessing he won at the end of the striving, we see the very height and picture of our life, if into that life has passed the life of Christ our Lord.

II. It is by wrestling that we win the Divine blessing, but whether in struggling against doubt, against temptation, or against the enemies of the Church, we must take heed that we fight wisely as well as earnestly. We may strive, and we must strive; but let us strive wisely and lawfully if we would win the blessing.

III. The homeliest, the least eventful life, may and should be a supernatural life—a life in which Christ dwells, a life which the Holy Spirit sanctifies. If we can thus strive and wrestle on, the dawn comes at last, and we are blessed of God.

BISHOP MAGEE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1078.

I. ANY attempt to make Jacob a hero, or even a good man, at the time of his deception of his father, must fail. At that time he represented the very lowest quality of manhood. We can call him a man only by courtesy; while Esau, a venturous and kind-hearted child of nature, stands up as a prince, uncrowned indeed, but only because a thief had robbed him of his crown. In the fact that God chose Jacob we find the germ of the redemptive idea at work.

II. Jacob was not at once promoted to his high place. As a wanderer and a stranger, he underwent most humiliating discipline, and on this night his old and wretched past was replaced by a new name and a new hope.

III. There must be such a night in every life—a night in which the sinful past shall go down for ever into the depths of unfathomable waters. The wrestling of Jacob was (1) long, (2) desperate, (3) successful.

IV. The night of wrestling was followed by a morning of happy reconciliation with his brother.

PARKER *The City Temple* (1870), p. 373.

(With 1 Sam. ii. 27; Acts i. 11, xvi. 9.)

I. THERE are anonymous ministries in life which teach the great facts of spirituality and invisibleness.

II. There are anonymous ministries in life which pronounce upon human conduct the judgment of Almighty God.

III. There are anonymous ministries in life which recall men from useless contemplation and reverie.

IV. There are anonymous ministries in life which urgently call men to benevolent activity. Two important and obvious lessons arise from the subject. (1) We are to view our own position and duty in the light of humanity as distinct from mere personality. We are parts of a whole. We belong to one another. In watering others we are watered ourselves. (3) We are not to wait for calls to service that are merely personal. *We* do not lift the gospel into dignity. It catches no lustre from our genius. It asks to be *spoken* that it may vindicate its own claim.

PARKER, *The City Temple*, vol. i., p. 1.

Chap xxxii.

I. GOD selects men for His work on earth, not because of their personal agreeableness, but because of their adaptation to the work they have to perform.

II. There is something affecting in the way in which guilty persons invoke the God of their fathers. Conscious that they deserve nothing at the hands of God, they seek to bring down on themselves the blessing of the God of their father and mother.

III. When a man is overtaken in his transgression, and all his wickedness seems to come down upon him, how true it is that then there rises up before him the concurrent suffering of all his household! It takes hold on him through his wife and his children and all that he loves.

IV. Men's sins carry with them a punishment in this life. Different sins are differently punished.

V. Nothing but a change of heart will put a man right with himself, right with society, and right with God.

VI. No man who is in earnest need ever despair because of past misdoing.

H. W. BEECHER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 106.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 88; *Congregationalist*, vol. xi., p. 6; W. M. Taylor, *Limitation of Life*, p. 30; Bishop Ewing, *Revelation Considered as Light*, p. 1; A. P. Stanley, *Good Words* (1874), p. 63; W. J. Keay, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 277; F. Langbridge, *Sunday Magazine* (1885), p. 675; Parker, *Pulpit Notes*, p. 15; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 118, and vol. iii., pp. 531, 541, 558. xxxii. 24-28.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 241. xxxii. 24-32.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 74.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 26.—"He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

Esau, with all his amiable qualities, was a man whose horizon was bounded by the limitations of the material world. He never rose above earth; he was a man after this world; he lived an eminently natural life. Jacob, on the other hand, was a man of many faults, yet there was a continuous testimony in his life to the value of things unseen. He had had wonderful dealings of God with him, and these had only the effect of whetting his spiritual appetite. When the opportunity came he availed himself of it to the full, and received from the hands of God Himself that blessing for which his soul had been longing. Notice:

I. He was thoroughly in earnest; he wrestled till he got the blessing.

II. If we wish to gain a blessing like Jacob's we must be alone with God. It is possible to be alone with God, even in the midst of a multitude.

III. Jacob's heart was burdened with a load of sin. It crushed his spirit, it was breaking his heart; he could bear it no more, and so he made supplication. He wanted to be lifted out of his weakness and made a new man.

IV. In the moment of his weakness Jacob made a great discovery. He found that when we cannot wrestle we can cling; so he wound his arms round the great Angel like a helpless child. He clings around those mighty arms and looks up into His face and says, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

V. He received the blessing he had wrestled for. As soon as Jacob was brought to his proper place, and in utter weakness was content to accept the blessing of God's free gift, that moment the blessing came. He received his royalty on the field of battle, was suddenly lifted up into a heavenly kingdom and made a member of a royal family.

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 38.

Though no vision is vouchsafed to our mortal eyes, yet angels of God are with us oftener than we know, and to the pure heart every home is a Bethel and every path of life a Penuel and a Mahanaim. In the outer world and the inner world do we see and meet continually these messengers of God. There are the angels of youth, and of innocence, and of opportunity; the angels of prayer, and of time, and of death. To those who

wrestle with them in faith and prayer they are angels with hands full of immortal gifts; to those who neglect or use them ill they are angels with drawn sword and scathing flame.

I. The earliest angel is the angel of youth. Do not think that you can retain him long. Use, as wise stewards, this blessed portion of your lives. Remember that as your faces are setting into the look which they shall wear in later years, so is it with your lives.

II. Next is the angel of innocent pleasure. Trifle not with this angel. Remember that in heathen mythology the Lord of Pleasure is also the God of Death. Guilty pleasure there is; guilty happiness there is not on earth.

III. There are the angels of time and opportunity. They are with us now, and we may unclench from their conquered hands garlands of immortal flowers. Hallow each new day in your morning prayer, for prayer, too, is an angel—an angel who can turn "pollution into purity, sinners into penitents, and penitents into saints."

IV. There is one angel with whom we must wrestle whether we will or no, and whose power of curse or blessing we cannot alter—the angel of death.

F. W. Farrar, *The Fall of Man and other Sermons*, p. 236.

References: xxxii. 26.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 363; I. Burns, *Select Remains*, p. 87; M. Dix, *Sermons—Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 180; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 192.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 28.—"And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Some surprise may be felt at first at the term prince being applied to the patriarch Jacob; for whatever good qualities distinguish his character, we hardly regard him as possessing princely ones. He has the quiet virtues of resignation, meekness and caution, but we hardly attribute to him that spirit and mettle, that vigorous temper and fire, which belong to the princely character. Yet when we consider Jacob we find that he had virtues which lie at the foundation of the royal and grand form of human character.

I. His patience was a princely virtue. How patiently he bore the long delays in Laban's service! the plots of his sons Simeon and Levi! We sometimes think of patience as the virtue of the weak, the sufferer, the inferior. Yet a great prime minister of England, when asked what was the most important virtue

for a prime minister, gave this answer: "Patience is the first, patience is the second, patience is the third."

II. Hopefulness was another of Jacob's regal virtues. He looked forward with trust and confidence to the future; he believed firmly in God's promises. His was a religious spirit; the religious mind is sustained by hope. "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord," he says in his last address, when he summed up the purpose of his life. He had waited, but never ceased to hope; the Divine reward had always been before him.

III. But it was in prayer specially that Jacob showed his princely character. What a nobility is attributed to prayer in this episode of Jacob's life! What a description the text gives us of the royal attributes of prayer—that it sets in motion the sovereign agency which settles all human events! Jacob had in the midst of all his worldly sorrows and depressions a religious greatness. While to human eyes he was a dejected man, in the presence of God he was a prince, and prevailed.

J. B. Mozley, *Sermons—Parochial and Occasional*, p. 347.

I. The very twofold name of Jacob and of Israel is but the symbol of the blending of contradictions in Jacob's character. The life of Jacob comes before us as a strange paradox, shot with the most marvellous diversities. He is the hero of faith, and the quick, sharp-witted schemer. To him the heavens are opened, and his wisdom passes into the cunning which is of the earth earthy.

II. The character of Jacob is a form which is to be found among the Gentiles no less than among the Jews. There are in our own day *prudential vices*, marring what would otherwise be worthy of all praise. And that which makes them most formidable is that they are the cleaving, besetting temptations of the religious temperament. The religious man who begins to look on worldlings with the feeling of one who gives God thanks that he is not like them is in the way to fall short even of their excellences. (1) Untruthfulness, the want of perfect sincerity and frankness, is, it must be owned with shame and sorrow, the besetting sin of the religious temperament. (2) It is part of the same form of character that it thinks much of ease and comfort, and shrinks from hardship and from danger. Cowardice and untruthfulness are near of kin and commonly go together, and that which makes the union so perilous is that they mask themselves as virtues.

III. The religious temperament, with all its faults, may pass

into the matured holiness of him who is not religious only, but godly. How the work is to be done "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," when thou too hast wrestled with the angel and hast become a prince with God.

E. H. PLUMPTRE, *Theology and Life*, p. 296.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 28.—G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 154; *Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i. (1887), p. 271; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 551; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 339. xxxii. 28, 29.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 36; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes* (1884), pp. 13, 16.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 29.—"Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name."

THIS is the question of all questions. For the name of God denotes His nature and His essence, the sum of all His properties and attributes. I. It is a question worth the asking. There is a despair of religious knowledge in the world, as though in God's rich universe, Theology, which is the science of God Himself, were the one field in which no harvest could be reaped, no service of sacred knowledge gained.

II. The knowledge of God is the one thing needful. He who seeks to do the work of a Paley in presenting Christian evidences in a sense conformable to the intellectual state of thoughtful men, as the shadows are folding themselves about this wearied century—above all, he who cultivates and disciplines his spirituality until it has become the central fact of his being—it is he who offers in a right and reverent spirit the prayer of Jacob at Peniel, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name."

III. It is necessary not only to ask the great question of the Divine nature, but to ask it in a right spirit. Jacob acted as though there were no other way of asking the question aright than by prayer; he must also ask it at the cost of personal suffering.

IV. What is the answer when it comes? Jacob's question was asked, but was not answered; or, rather, it was answered not directly and in so many words, but effectually: "He blessed him there." It is not knowledge that God gives to striving souls, but blessing. He stills your doubtings; He helps you to trust Him. You go forth no longer as Jacob, the supplanter, mean, earthly, temporal, but in the power of a Divine enthusiasm, as an Israel, a prince with God.

J. E. C. WELLDON, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 428.

REFERENCE: A. Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 413.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 29.—"And He blessed him there."

God blessed Jacob at Peniel because he asked to be blessed, and his desire for it constituted at once his worthiness and his capacity. He began the blessing by the agony of prayer, and he completed it with the discipline of sorrow.

I. Life being itself a blessing, and to one who believes in God and hopes for Him the greatest of all blessings, God makes it a yet greater blessing by ordaining for it a fixed plan.

II. God does not expect perfect characters to fulfil His purpose. He chooses the fittest instruments He can find for His purest purposes, and trains them and bears with them until their work is done.

III. God uses circumstances as His angels and voices to us, and He has special epochs and crises in which He visits our souls and lives.

IV. The perfection of youth is eagerness without impetuosity; the perfection of old age is wisdom without cynicism, and a faith in the purpose of God which deepens and widens with the years.

Bishop Thorold, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 145.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 31.—"And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh."

I. From the great conflict with sin none come off without many a scar. We may wrestle and prevail, but there will be touches of the enemy, which will leave their long and bitter memories. The way to heaven is made of falling down and rising up again. The battle is no steady, onward fight, but rallies and retreats, retreats and rallies.

II. The reason of our defeats is that the old sin of the character continues, and continues with unabated force, in the heart of a child of God. There are two ways in which sin breaks out and gains an advantage over a believer. (1) A new temptation suddenly presents itself. (2) The old habit of sin recurs—recurs, indeed, sevenfold, but still the same sin.

III. All sin in a believer must arise from a reduction of grace. This is the result of grieving the Holy Ghost by a careless omission of prayer or other means of grace. There was an inward defeat before there was an outward and apparent one.

IV. Defeat is not final. It is not the end of the campaign, It is but one event in the war. It may even be converted into a positive good to the soul, for God can and will overrule guilt

to gain. He allows the defeat to teach us repentance and humility.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 6th series, p. 33.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 31.—Parker, vol. i., p. 363. xxxii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 116; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 106; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 63; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 99; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 1; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 409. xxxiii. 9.—Parker, vol. i., p. 363. xxxiii. 17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 543.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 20, xxxiv. 1.—"And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel. And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land."

IN erecting this altar Jacob both set up a witness against the false worship and idolatry of the people among whom he dwelt, and at the same time provided a church or centre of unity for all his numerous family and dependents in the regular service of Jehovah. But the enticements of the world were too great, and prevailed to bring misery and sin into his home. This chapter points out the danger to which young persons are exposed, of being deluded and led away, first by vain curiosity and then by worldly and carnal lusts, to misery and ruin; and this through the influence especially of bad example.

I. When Dinah went to visit the daughters of the land, we may well suppose that she was weary of the quiet, uniform course of life kept up at her father's house. Her father's authority and wishes being set aside, she went out without God's blessing, and misery and ruin followed. This represents: (1) the guilt and punishment which Christian people make themselves liable to when they disregard the authority of those whom the providence of God has placed over them. (2) The danger of becoming tired of Christianity.

II Two cautions suggest themselves from the study of this chapter. (1) We must learn to look on Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, as our only true Father and Friend. (2) In the service of God we must not expect to find all plain and easy, but quite otherwise: the more earnestly and steadily we serve God, the more trials we must expect to encounter.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. x., p. 296.

REFERENCES: xxxiii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 116; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 84. xxxiii. 4.—R. C. Trench, *Brief Thoughts and Meditations*, p. 55. xxxiii. 5.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 305. xxxiii. 9, 11, 13.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon*

Notes, pp. 19, 21. xxxiii. 14.—F. R. Havergal, *Sunday Magazine* (1879), p. 918. xxxiii. 17.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 93. xxxiii. 20.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. x., p. 296. xxxiv. 31.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 93. xxxv. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1395. xxxv. 3.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 366. xxxv. 5-11.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 8.

Chap. xxxv., ver. 8.—"But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth."

The name given to the old oak-tree speaks of mourning, of very thoughtful and sorrowful, if not of very bitter tears; of kindly remembrances of old days and faithful duties; of the utter blotting out of every recollection but such as are kindly, sad, and hopeful. Deborah was only an old servant,—one who had served the family so long, so faithfully, that she had grown one of it,—prized in her active life, cared for in her failing age, wept over at the last with this memorable weeping. All the realities, the uttermost commonplaces of human life and history, and the passing on of time, are infinitely touching when really brought home to us. The wearied-out old frame laid in the last sleep, the hopeful young days 125 years ago, the busy, helpful life of work and worry, you see them all. There are practical suggestions here. (1) There could not have been this near and warm relation, but that the relation had lasted long. (2) We ought not to have mere money relations with those who serve us. (3) Those who serve may see from this how honourable is their calling, if they abide in it with God.

A. K. H. B., *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 45.

Reference: xxxv. 18.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 68.

Chap. xxxv., vers. 28, 29.—"And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, etc."

The lives of Abraham and Jacob are as attractive as the life of Isaac is apparently unattractive. Isaac's character had few salient features. It had no great faults, no striking virtues; it is the quietest, smoothest, most silent character in the Old Testament. It is owing to this that there are so few remarkable events in the life of Isaac, for the remarkableness of events is created by the character that meets them. It seems to be a law that all national, social and personal life should advance by

alternate contractions and expansions. There are few instances where a great father has had a son who equalled him in greatness. The old power more often reappears in Jacob than in Isaac. The spirit of Abraham's energy passed over his son to his son's son. The circumstances that moulded the character of Isaac were these. (1) He was an only son. (2) His parents were both very old. An atmosphere of antique quiet hung about his life. (3) These two old hearts lived for him alone.

I. Take the excellences of his character first. (1) His submissive self-surrender on Mount Gerizim, which shadowed forth the perfect sacrifice of Christ. (2) His tender constancy, seen in his mourning for his mother, and in the fact that he alone of the patriarchs represented to the Jewish nation the ideal of true marriage. (3) His piety. It was as natural to him as to a woman to trust and love: not strongly, but constantly, sincerely. His trust became the habit of his soul. His days were knit each to each by natural piety.

II. Look next at the faults of Isaac's character. (1) He was slow, indifferent, inactive. We find this exemplified in the story of the wells (xxvi. 18-22). (2) The same weakness, ending in selfishness, appears in the history of Isaac's lie to Abimelech. (3) He showed his weakness in the division between Jacob and Esau. He took no pains to harmonise them. The curse of favouritism prevailed in his tent. (4) He dropped into a querulous old age, and became a lover of savoury meat. But our last glimpse of him is happy. He saw the sons of Jacob at Hebron, and felt that God's promise was fulfilled.

S. A. BROOKE, *Sermons*, p. 333.

REFERENCES: xxxv. 29.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 126. xxxv.—*Ibid.*, p. 121; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 103; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 119. xxxvi. 24.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vi., p. 352.

Chap. xxxvii.

JOSEPH'S is one of the most interesting histories in the world. He has the strange power of uniting our hearts to him, as to a well-beloved friend. He had "the genius to be loved greatly," because he had the genius to love greatly, and his genius still lives in these Bible pages. We discover in Joseph—

I. A hated brother. The boy was his father's pet. Very likely he was the perfect picture of Rachel who was gone,

and so Jacob saw and loved in him his sainted wife. In token of love his father foolishly gave him a coat of many colours, to which, alas! the colour of blood was soon added. It was for no good reason that his brothers hated him. Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Not that he was a sneaking tell-tale; but he would not do as they did, nor would he hide from his father their evil doings. God means the children of a family to feel bound together by bands that grapple the heart, and to stand true to one another to life's end. Reverence the mighty ties of kindred which God has fashioned. Joseph also teaches you never to make any one your foe without a very good reason. The weakest whom you wrong may one day be your master.

II. Joseph was also a blameless youth. Though terribly tempted, he never yielded. He was shamefully wronged, yet he was not hardened or soured. His soul was like the oak which is nursed into strength by storms. In his heart, not on it, he wore a talisman that destroyed sin's charms. The heavenly plant of his piety disclosed all its beauty, and gave out its sweet odours in the wicked palaces of Potiphar and Pharaoh.

III. Joseph was also a famous ruler. He entered Egypt as a Hebrew slave, and became its prime minister. He was the hero of his age, the saviour of his country, the most successful man of his day. He became so great because he was so good; he was a noble man because he was a thorough man of God.

IV. Joseph was a type of Christ. Joseph, like Jesus, was his father's well-beloved son, the best of brothers, yet hated and rejected by his own; was sold from envy for a few pieces of silver, endured a great temptation, yet without sin; was brought into a low estate and falsely condemned; was the greatest of forgivers, the forgiver of his own murderers; and was in all things the son and hope of Israel.

J. WELLS, *Bible Children*, p. 35.

REFERENCES: xxxvii.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 135; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 139. xxxvii. 1-11, A. Craig, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 358; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 113; W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 7. xxxvii. 1-36.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 99. xxxvii. 3.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Note-book*, p. 31.

Chap. xxxvii., vers. 3, etc.

JACOB was wrong in making a favourite of Joseph. The coat of many colours was the dress the first-born child was to wear. In giving it to Joseph, Jacob was making him like

the first-born son. It was a beautiful white tunic, with a great many pieces bound upon it—not many colours like a rainbow.

I. Joseph's coat must have been a snare to him, for we read that he was a *tell-tale*. He told his father about the wrong things that his brothers did. Never tell of others till you have used every possible persuasion. If you try to do good to others, you must be very good yourself.

II. Just at that time Joseph had two dreams. Perhaps it was the wearing of the coat that made him have these dreams. He was a little proud about the coat, so he had proud dreams.

III. When his father sent him to Dothan, we find that Joseph was very obedient and very brave. He went at once. He lost his way, but he was so persevering he would not go back, because he was determined not to return without doing what his father told him; and even after his brothers had sold him, we find that he was patient and forgiving. The reason was that he loved God and tried to please Him. God took care of him and blessed him through life.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 317.

REFERENCES: xxxvii 12, 35.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 20; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 120. xxxvii. 18.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 140. xxxvii. 19.—Parker, vol. i., p. 287; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 262. xxxvii. 25-36.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 128. xxxvii. 33.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 139. xxxvii. 36.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 167. xxxviii.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 128. xxxix.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 140; Parker, vol. i., p. 294; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 165; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 138. xxxix. 1.—*Ibid.*, p. 128. xxxix. 1-7.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 33. xxxix. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1610; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 369. xxxix. 2-21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 96. xxxix. 7-23.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 48.

Chap. xxxix., ver. 9.—"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

WE are accustomed to admire the mere act of resistance to temptation, by whomsoever and howsoever offered. But there is a vast difference between the ways in which temptation is resisted. Some, knowing the thing desired of them to be essentially wrong, have recourse to cowardly shifts and evasions. They are unable to comply; thus much they will answer; but for this inability they will render all sorts of

secondary and insufficient reasons, and keep back the right one. How very different from this weak and ineffectual course is the refusal of one who fearlessly states at once the right and master reason why he should not yield to temptation; "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" One of the lowest advantages of the brave and decided course is that such a person has the *least trouble* after all. His place is ascertained; his colours are shown. He is no waverer, and the crowd of busy mischief-makers cease from him and let him alone. The noble words of our text let us into the whole secret of endurance.

I. The answer of Joseph implies a sense of direct accountableness to God. This sense of responsibility leads at once to a truer estimate of right and wrong. While we tarry on the level of the world's maxims and habits, and try to decide our line of conduct, many a matter seems ambiguous and difficult to determine; but rise to the throne of God, and look down from thence, and all is clear. Oh for that second and better nature, sprung from the habit of seeing God in everything, which, when doubts, when questionings, when temptations arise, asks counsel at once of Him, runs into the strong tower of His name, and is safe.

II. This answer implies a sense of sin. Sin is a word of which the world knows not the meaning. Men must know what God is, or they cannot know what sin is. When Joseph spoke of sinning against God, he used this term of a positive and definite God, who had manifested Himself, and with whom he was in covenant. To sin against Him, to break His positive command, was to reject and despise his covenant God; to tread under foot His promises and His mercies.

III. This reply shows that true courage and seasonable boldness which ever characterise the genuine soldier of heaven. In every occupation of life, in all intercourse, in toil and in recreation, our Christian armour should be worn, and never be laid aside. The moment our allegiance is tested, the moment that the world requires what God forbids or forbids what God requires, we must stand to our arms, and admit no thought of a surrender.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 245.

I. AT once we recognise the presence of the Holy Ghost in this scene. He is its light and glory, its power and victory. God the Holy fills the entire field of vision, and Joseph is

strengthened by an all-pervading awe of Him. The recognition of God keeps him from sin. His sacred presence blocks the way. This Authority ruling in and for righteousness shuts out all possibility of yielding.

II. This passage gives evidence of a large access of energy to Joseph's conscience, from his perfect identification of God with his own personal purity.

III. Joseph differed from Jacob in that he had no Bethel visions, and from Abraham in not hearing the Divine voice; but he had the Divine facts of life, and in them he read the ideas and will of God. The oldest of all Bibles, the Bible of human experience, was before him, and he read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested its contents.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 57.

REFERENCES: xxxix. 9.—C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 103. xxxix. 12.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 207. xxxix. 20.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Note-book*, p. 40; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 369. xxxix. 20—xl. 14.—Parker, vol. i., p. 302. xxxix. 21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 94, and vol. xxii., p. 159. xl.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 140; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 150, W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 61. xl. 7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 90. xl. 8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 139. xl. 9-11.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 70. xli.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 146; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 189; Parker, vol. i., p. 311. xli. 1-25.—Parker, vol. i., p. 311. xli. 1-37.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 162. xli. 1-46.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 76. xli. 4.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 185. xli. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 680; J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on the Parables, etc.*, p. 314. xli. 37-57.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 209; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 171. xli. 46—xlii. 22.—Parker, vol. i., p. 320. xli. 47-52.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 91. xli. 51.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 401. xli. 56.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 24. xlii.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 231; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 152. xlii. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 234. xlii. 1-17.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 240. xlii. 1-24.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 179. xlii. 1-38.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 108; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 102. xlii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 142.

Chap. xlii., ver. 3.—"And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt."

I. THE story of Joseph is a good example of what is meant by Providence working for the best in the lives of men. Look at the young foreigner, as he comes to a land not his own; see how he resists the one great temptation of his age and station; observe how, through means not of his own seeking, through

good report and evil, through much misunderstanding of others, but by consistent integrity and just dealing on his own part, he overcomes all the difficulties of his position, and is remembered long afterwards in his adopted land as the benefactor of his generation and the deliverer of his country.

II. The story of Joseph is, perhaps, of all the stories in the Old Testament, the one which most carries us back to our childhood, both from the interest we felt in it as children, and from the true picture of family life which it presents. It brings before us the way in which the greatest blessings for this life and the next depend on the keeping up of family love pure and fresh, as when the preservation and fitting education of the chosen people depended on that touching generosity and brotherly affection which no distance of time, no new customs, no long sojourn in a strange land, could extinguish in the heart of Joseph. Home is on earth the best likeness of heaven; and heaven is that last and best home in which, when the journey of life is over, Joseph and his brethren, Jacob and his sons, Rachel and her children, shall meet to part no more.

A. P. STANLEY, *Sermons in the East*, p. 1

REFERENCES: xlii. 3.—G. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv, p. 218. xlii. 4.—*Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 300. xlii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 4.

Chap. xlii., ver. 9.—"Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, etc."

JACOB became aware of a fact which his brother had not cared to know—a fact for himself and his seed after him. The Being who had made man in His own image told this man that he was made in His image; taught him that he was not meant, like the serpent, to go on his belly and eat dust. This is the only explanation given. It assumes that man lives because he is related to God, that when he denies that relation he chooses death; it assumes that God is continually teaching men of their relation to Him, and that they are continually flying from His voice.

I. Joseph's story is in strict accordance with these principles. He had dreams of greatness: his brothers' sheaves are to bow down before him; the sun and the moon are to pay him obeisance. In his vanity he tells the dreams, and is hated the more. His brothers plot against his life, throw him into a pit, sell him to a company of Ishmaelites. There is no description of his anguish, or of any thoughts of comfort that came to him. We are merely told that God was with him, that he found favour with Potiphar, and became the steward of his house.

II. We know that though our dreams have never told us anything about that which is to come, they have told us secrets of our own experience; they have shown how near dark, fierce thoughts, which we fancied at a great distance, were lying to us. The interpretation of dreams for us and for the old world lies in the belief that we are under a loving and Divine Teacher, who does not wish us to walk in darkness.

III. There are crises, however, in a man's life, when he is neither troubled with the dreams of the night nor of the day—when he is called to act, and act at once—when life and death hang on the decision of a moment. To such a crisis had Joseph come when he spoke the words, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The belief in a living, present God, was then all in all to him.

IV. Joseph's sermon to Pharaoh was a simple declaration that the Righteous Being was the Lord over Egypt, that He could set it in order. And his sermon to the Egyptians was the proof which his administration gave that he had spoken truth.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 118.

REFERENCES: xlii. 11.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 369. xlii. 13.—G. Orme, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 15. xlii. 18.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 369; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 131. xlii. 21.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Missions*, p. 248; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 178.

Chap. xlii., vers. 21, 22.—"And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, etc."

I. JOSEPH'S brethren had not been placed in any peculiar circumstances of trial since the loss of Joseph; consequently their sin had slept. There had been nothing to call it to light; they had well-nigh forgotten it; its heinousness had become dim in the distance. But now they were in trouble, and they could not help seeing the hand of God in that trouble. Their spiritual instinct told them that their trouble did not spring out of the ground; it had been planted there,—it had a root. Their sin had found them out at last, and their own adversity brought about that contrition for their offence which its own hatefulness ought to have been sufficient to produce.

II. We see from this story that men may commit sins, and may forget them; and yet the sins may be recorded, and may one day rise up again with a frightful vitality. Men will soon bury their own sins, if they be left to themselves; but it is like

burying seed, which appears to die and be forgotten, and yet it rises up again, and perhaps becomes a great tree.

III. The voice of conscience is a good voice, a wholesome voice,—yea, the very voice of God to our souls, and one to be welcomed by us if we only listen to it at the right time. The consciousness of guilt is a blessed thing, if only it come at the right time, and when there is opportunity for bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Well for us if our estimate of our condition is the same, at least in its main features, as that estimate which God has made, and which the last day will produce!

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 118.

REFERENCES: xlii. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 840. xlii. 24.—Parker, vol. i., p. 329. xlii. 25.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 194. xlii. 28.—E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 125.

Chap. xlii., ver. 36.—"All these things are against me."

So spoke the patriarch Jacob when Joseph had been made away with, Simeon was detained in Egypt, Benjamin threatened, and his remaining sons were suspected by him and distrusted; when at his door was a grievous famine, enemies or strangers round about, evil in prospect, and in the past a number of sad remembrances. Thus did Almighty God remind His people that the world was not their rest.

I. In Jacob is prefigured the Christian. What he said in dejection of mind, the Christian must say, not in dejection, not in complaint or impatience, but calmly, as if confessing a doctrine—"'All these things are against me,' but it is my portion; they are against me, that I may fight with and overcome them." If there were no enemy, there could be no conflict; were there no trouble, there could be no faith; were there no trial, there could be no love; were there no fear, there could be no hope.

II. To passages like these it is natural to object, that they do not belong to the present time, that so far from Christians being in trouble because they are Christians, it is those who are not Christians who are under persecution. The answer is that affliction, hardship, and distress *are* the Christian's portion, both promised and bestowed, though at first sight they seem not to be. If Christians are in prosperity, not in adversity, it is because, by disobedience, they have forfeited the promise and privilege of affliction.

III. Take up thy portion then, Christian soul, and weigh it

well, and learn to love it. There is an inward world which none see but those who belong to it—an inward world into which they enter who come near to Christ. They have a portion in destinies to which other men are strangers; and, having destinies, they have conflicts also. Never, while the Church lasts, will the words of old Jacob be reversed—All things here are against us, but God; and if God be for us, who can really be against us?

J. H. NEWMAN, *Selection from Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 113; also vol. v., p. 284.

REFERENCES: xlii. 36.—Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Sermons Preached at St. Paul's*, No. 18; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 371; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 837; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 19. xlii. 38.—S. W. Skeffington, *Our Sins and Our Saviour*, p. 90. xliii.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 231; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 156; W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 122. xliii. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 96. xliii. 14.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 194. xliii. 15—xlv. 3.—*Ibid.*, p. 205. xliii. 27.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. i., p. 350.

Chap. xliii., vers. 30, 31.—"He entered into his chamber and wept there. And he washed his face and went out and refrained himself."

THE text exhibits the contrast between the secret life and the outward life of each one of us; between the chamber and the banqueting-room; between the man whom God sees and the man whom the world sees, in each one of us. It is to the thought of secret sorrows that the text directs us; sorrows which, however keenly felt in secret, must be disguised and suppressed in the presence of others.

I. The trouble of Joseph, on this occasion, was one of the heart or affections. His pent-up love was overwhelming; it could only be relieved by a burst of tears; he entered into his chamber and wept there. Where is the house in which affection is not the source of some secret trouble? Loneliness of heart, unrequited love, is a calamity; God sees it, God pities it; but be brave in His strength to endure it, and do not put aside, in perverseness or self-will, that offer of Divine love which, in the long run, will be worth all else to you.

II. It is but a step from this to the next example—that of anxiety about the souls of others. What words could more aptly designate such a life of anxious watching than those which speak of a weeping in the chamber and a refraining oneself below—a couch watered with tears, yet a face which must smile by day that it may not tell its tale? Well is it written of such

a sufferer, that he went out and refrained himself that he might not reveal, that he might not betray!

III. Think next of those distresses which come to us from the inward strivings of sin; from those restless workings of inward corruption which make the life of so many one long toil and conflict. These, too, above all, are secret things. They are our secrets, but they exist. They make a large part of our existence, and we have to refrain ourselves not to show them. (1) To some I would say, Do not nurse your secret sorrows. Sorrows of affection grow by pondering. They are loud calls to work. (2) To stronger men, who have no experiences of secret sorrow, I would say, Beware of disregarding and despising those who have. Make room for others. Recognise the existence of secret sorrow as an explanation of many phenomena of character.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lessons of Life and Godliness*, p. 98.

REFERENCES: xliv.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 161; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 231; W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 122.

Chap. xliv., ver. 1.—"And he commanded the steward of his house saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, etc."

I. THERE had been a strong combination, designed and undesigned, to keep Joseph down. But it was in vain. "Light is sown for the righteous." It is sometimes late in springing, but God's harvests are large ones, if it is far on in the autumn before they are gathered. They only linger to grow. He who had been sold as a slave lived to say to the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food"; and the men were those who had sold him.

II. Joseph has always been a favourite type of Jesus. In these words of his we seem to hear our Joseph saying to His stewards, the ministers and teachers of every sort, "Fill with food, *not flowers*." Hungry men cannot eat flowers; yet some preachers act as though poetry and pretty ideas were the only things fit for food. Food, *not chaff*. Chaff is worse than flowers; they are at least pleasant to look at before they fade, but dry, tasteless preaching gives neither pleasure nor profit. The finest of the wheat is in the granary, and only needs serving out.

III. *Fill*,—do not give short measure. There need be no

stint. There is plenty. The less the mind that comes, the more pains should be taken that it has a full sack.

IV. "Put their money in their sacks." God's grace is free. Salvation cannot be of grace and of debt. Our royal Joseph is a King, and does not trade.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 12.

REFERENCE: xliv. 1-5.—Parker, vol. i., p. 338.

Chap. xliv., ver. 12.—"The cup was found in Benjamin's sack."

I. THAT there is sorrow, and sorrow on a vast scale, is a great fact—a fact both too patent and too painful to be gainsaid. Joseph put the cup in the sack to try his brothers' faith, love, and loyalty to their father. (1) Sorrow was sent into the world as a preventive of greater sorrow. (2) Sorrow gives occasion for the exercise of many an else impossible virtue. (3) This would be a lame excuse indeed if it stood alone. But grief is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (4) When we remember our sins, we wonder, not that life has had so many sorrows, but that it has had so few.

II. Why should sorrow so often smite us in the most sensitive place? or, to take up the parable of the text, (1) Why should the cup be in Benjamin's sack? Just because it is Benjamin's, we reply. The very thing that leads God to smite at all, leads Him to smite you here. God takes away earthly pleasure, and thus helps you to remember your sin and repent of it. (2) The cup was put there to bring them to a better mind ever after. (3) It was put there to give Joseph the opportunity of making himself known to his brethren. (4) It was put there to lead them out of the land of famine into the land of plenty. From this we may learn three lessons: (*a*) Learn to think more kindly of God and His dispensations, as you see how much reason you have to expect sorrow, how little right to look for joy; (*b*) learn the lesson the lesser sorrows are meant to teach, lest you need the greater; (*c*) take care lest you not only lose the joy, but lose the good the loss of joy was meant to give.

J. B. FIGGIS, *The Preacher's Lantern*, vol. ii., p. 694.

REFERENCES: xlv.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 165; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 219; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 251. xlv. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 91; G. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 245. xlv. 1-15.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 122. xlv. 2.—*Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 13.

Chap. xlv., ver. 3.—"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence."

THE difficulties of Joseph's history begin with his elevation. At the time of the famine there is much to wonder at in Joseph's conduct to his brethren. Why did he so long and by such strange artifices delay the disclosure which an affectionate heart must have been yearning to make? Why had he never made inquiries about his family, though there was free communication between Egypt and Canaan?

I. We can only believe that Joseph acted thus strangely in obedience to a direct intimation from God, who had wise purposes to answer by deferring for a time his restoration to his family. How are we to explain his conduct when his brethren were actually brought before him: his harsh language; his binding Simeon; his putting the cup in Benjamin's sack? Joseph was an injured man, and he could not trust his brothers. By calling them spies, and thus throwing them off their guard and making it their interest to tell the truth, he diminished the likelihood of falsehood. He wanted information which he could not procure by ordinary means, therefore he took extraordinary means, for if the brethren never returned he knew too well that Benjamin had perished.

II. How can we explain Joseph's conduct when his brethren returned and brought Benjamin with them? Strange that he should still have used deceit. The probable explanation is: (1) That Joseph sought to ascertain the disposition of the ten brethren towards Benjamin. He was planning the bringing of the whole family to Egypt, and it was needful to find out first if they were well agreed. (2) He also wished to assure himself that the children of Rachel were as dear to Jacob now as they were in their youth. There was as much affection as wisdom in these multiplied delays, which at first sight appear to have unnecessarily, if not unfeelingly, deferred the moment of reunion.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1488.

JOSEPH recognised his brethren at once, though they failed, as they bowed before the mighty vicegerent of Egypt, to recognise in him the child by them so pitilessly sold into bondage; and Joseph, we are told, "remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them": how their sheaves should stand round about and make obeisance to his sheaf; how sun and moon and eleven

stars should all do homage to him. All at length was coming true.

I. Now, of course it would have been very easy for him at once to have made himself known to his brethren, to have fallen on their necks and assured them of his forgiveness. But he has counsels of love at once wiser and deeper than would have lain in such a ready and off-hand declaration of forgiveness. His purpose is to prove whether they are different men, or, if not, to make them different men from what they were when they practised that deed of cruelty against himself. He feels that he is carrying out, not his own purpose, but God's, and this gives him confidence in hazarding all, as he does hazard it, in bringing this matter to a close.

II. Two things were necessary here: the first that he should have the opportunity of observing their conduct to their younger brother, who had now stepped into his place, and was the same favourite with his father as Joseph once had been; the second, that by some severe treatment, which should bear a more or less remote resemblance to their treatment of himself, he should prove whether he could call from them a lively remembrance and a penitent confession of their past guilt.

III. The dealings of Joseph with his brethren are, to a great extent, the very pattern of God's dealings with men. God sees us careless, in easily forgiving ourselves our old sins; and then, by trial and adversity and pain, He brings these sins to our remembrance, causes them to find us out, and at length extracts from us a confession, "We are verily guilty." And then, when tribulation has done its work, He is as ready to confirm His love to us as ever was Joseph to confirm his love to his brethren.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 65; also *Sermons New and Old*, p. 37.

REFERENCES: xlv. 3.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 370. xlv. 3-5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 449.

Chap. xlv., ver. 4.—"**Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.**"

IT was by a strange and seemingly circuitous route that these brethren of Joseph were brought near to him. Between Joseph and his brethren there was an immeasurable distance—all the difference between a nature given over to God and one abandoned to the force of evil passion. We may see in this narrative a type of the ways and means God still employs for bringing

the wandering brothers of Joseph's great Antitype near to Him.

I. In order that the brothers may be really drawn near to Joseph, they have first to be separated from him by their own sin.

II. The next step towards bringing them near is their own want.

III. When they get into Joseph's presence they are suddenly subjected to the most unlooked-for and crushing trials.

IV. They are smitten to the heart with the recollection of bygone sins; these are brought to their remembrance as sins *against their brother*.

V. They were *alone* with Joseph when he made himself known to them.

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 1st series, p. 290.

This was the address of Joseph to his brethren—to the brethren who had despised and hated him. There is no anger in the address; it is the expression of love. Joseph seeks not to punish, but to forgive and console them.

I. Christ, the true Joseph, is ever making the same appeal to the hungry and the sinner. There was famine in the land, and the brethren of Joseph were in want of food. Joseph alone has the key of the storehouses that overflow with food. He will not send the empty away, but will fill the hungry with good things. It is so with Christ. If we acknowledge our hunger and turn to Him, He will feed us with the bread of heaven.

II. To the *sinner*. The appeal of our Lord to those who have sinned against Him is, "Come near to me, I pray you." The appeal is to man's free-will. Christ is ready, but man must make a step towards Him.

III. *I pray you*. How earnest is the entreaty! I—who am God, your Creator; I, whom you have forgotten, wronged, pierced with your sins, and crucified again—"I pray you!"

S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 78.

Chap. xlv., ver. 5.—"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves: . . . for God did send me before you."

Joseph looks away from and thrusts aside the wickedness of his brothers, and refers all to the over-ruling providence of God, bringing good out of evil, and making all things work together for good, to the family of His chosen servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In time of bereavement and sorrow we may put these words into the mouth of him whom we have lost. After

a death we are apt to reproach ourselves bitterly for things done or left undone. "Now, therefore," says the one we have lost, whom we trust reposes in Paradise, "be not grieved or angry with yourselves; the faults were not intentional, there was no lack of love. I reproach you not, for God did send me before you, a spy into the promised land. I am at rest, and tarry for you to come to me. I have gone 'to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'"

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 81.

xlv. 5, 8.

THE words of Joseph in the text contrast somewhat strangely with the words spoken by his brethren of themselves. It is clear that the view he took of their conduct was the one most likely to give them ease. He assured them that after all they were but instruments in God's hands, that God had sent him, that God's providence was at work for good when they sold him as a slave. Both views are true, and both important. The brethren had done what they did as wickedly and maliciously as possible; nevertheless it was true that it was not they, but God, who had sent Joseph into Egypt.

I. That God governs the world, we do not—we dare not—doubt; but it is equally true that He governs in a way which we should not have expected, and that much of His handiwork appears strange. So strange, indeed, that we know that it has been in all times, and is in our time, easy to say, God cares not, God sees not, or even to adopt the bolder language of the fool, and say, "There is no God." Scriptural illustrations of the same kind of contradiction as we have in the text are to be found: (1) in the case of Esau and Jacob; (2) in the manner in which the hardheartedness and folly of Pharaoh were made to contribute to the carrying out of God's designs concerning the Israelites; (3) in the circumstances of our Lord's sorrowful life on earth, and especially the circumstances connected with His shameful and yet life-giving death.

II. Our own lives supply us with illustrations of the same truth. Who cannot call to mind cases in which God's providence has brought about results in the strangest way, educing good from evil, turning that which seemed to be ruin into blessing making even the sins and follies of men to declare His glory and to forward the spiritual interests of their brethren. We see human causes producing effects, but we

may also see God's hand everywhere; all things living and moving in Him; no sparrow falling without His leave; no hair of one of His saints perishing.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 63.

Chap. xlv., vers. 7, 8.—"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance, etc."

I. "GOD sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth." Joseph referred the whole order and purpose of his existence, all that had been adverse to it, all that had been prosperous in it, to God. He knew that violence and disorder had been at work in his life. What temptation had he to think of them as God's? Imputing to Him a distinct purpose of good and blessedness, what a strange perverseness it would have been to think that anything which had marred the goodness and blessedness, anything which had striven to defeat the purpose, was His! It was the great eternal distinction which a heart cultivated, purged, made simple by God's discipline, confessed—nay, found it impossible to deny.

II. Joseph starts with assuring his brethren that God had been the orderer and director of his history, and that He had a purpose in it. He thinks that the special work to which he has been appointed is to preserve for them a posterity on the earth. Joseph had no notion that his preservation meant anything, except so far as it served for the establishment and propagation of the covenant family. For the sake of his family he was sent there; he must act for it, whether he puts his brothers to torture or himself.

III. And so he was indeed "saving their lives by a great deliverance." He was providing against the immediate destruction which the famine was threatening them with; he was providing against the more thorough and permanent destruction which their own selfishness and crimes were working out.

IV. "He hath made me a father to Pharaoh," etc. Joseph was maintaining, as he believed, a seed in which all families of the earth were to be blessed. But though this obligation was first, it did not exclude the other. God, who had sent him to save his own family, had surely just as much proposed that he should be a father to Pharaoh and a lord of his land. So Joseph judged; on that faith he acted.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 137

I. The dreams. Joseph's dreams reflected in the quiet of the night the aspirations and ambitious forecasts of the future which haunted his daily life.

II. The discipline. Joseph met with misfortunes, and this experience taught him: (1) independence (*e.g.*, of his father); (2) to serve—that lesson so needful to power; (3) enlarged ideas; (4) the lesson that would be at once the strength of his life and the correction of his vanity—viz., his absolute dependence on God.

III. The fulfilment of his dreams. (1) He met with outward success. (2) Two great changes passed over his character. He learned to ascribe all his success to God, and he perceived the object for which he had been elevated: "God sent me before you *to preserve you*," etc.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 217.

Chap. xlv., ver. 8.—"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

JOSEPH was in Egypt in 1730 B.C. At that time, according to the inscription on the tomb of Baba, a great scarcity of food prevailed. The occupant of the tomb relates his good deeds, and these were the doling out of bread to the hungry. Doubtless the man was one of Joseph's subordinates. The exact meaning of Joseph's Egyptian name is difficult to determine, but the most plausible explanation is "food of life," or "food of the living," a most appropriate name for the man who did so much in the great famine to rescue Pharaoh's myriads from starvation.

I. The story of Joseph is to all men for ever the best proof of the working of the hand of Providence.

II. As through the life of Joseph, so through our life, there are threads which connect the different scenes and bind together the destinies of the different actors.

III. This history and the inspired commentary on it in Psalm cv. teach us the wonderful continuity of God's plan and the oneness of the thread that binds together the histories of Israel and of Egypt.

C. H. BUTCHER, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 208.

REFERENCES: xlv. 8.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 179; W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 222. xlv. 9-11.—Parker, vol. i., p. 352.

Chap. xlv., ver. 14.—"And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck."

THIS incident is the most unquestionable instance in the Bible of tears of love. No other feeling but love made Joseph

weep. Sorrow there could not have been, for at that moment, on his side at least, it was all joy. Job says, as the great purpose of all that God did with him, "God maketh my heart soft." And it is David's constant experience, of which he speaks with pleasure, "My soul is even as a weaned child."

I. Tears of love are true evidences—and evidences which can scarcely speak falsely.

II. Tears have much of the nature of sacrifice in them.

III. Though there are no tears in heaven, yet loving tears on earth come nearer than anything else in the world to the alleluias of the saints, for they are the outbursts of an irrepressible emotion.

IV. Tears of kindness act back again, and make the kindness from which they sprang. In order to have the heart soft enough for tears (1) you must lead a pure life; (2) you must feel that you are loved; (3) you must be subdued; (4) you must help yourself by action; (5) you must have pity.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 77.

REFERENCE: S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 211.

Chap. xlv., ver. 15.—"Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."

I. WE cannot read the history of Joseph without feeling that a greater than Joseph is here; a Son, the well-beloved of His Father, against whom His own flesh and blood conspired to take away His life, but who from His prison came forth to reign, who is exalted at the right hand of God to be a Prince and a Saviour.

II. This marvellous history teaches more than this. We also are guilty concerning our Brother. As for us and for our salvation He came down from heaven to save us by His death, so now that He has gone up to heaven He lives to save us by His life. He makes us feel our need of Him and stand before Him self-accusing, self-condemned.

III. He who has done all this will never leave us, never forsake us, for He dieth no more.

W. W. CHAMPNEYS, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 641.

REFERENCE: xlv. 16.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 137.

Chap. xlv., ver. 27.—"When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived."

WE see here how probabilities are the handmaids and the

helpers of faith. Slight tokens become the aliment, the very food, on which action feeds, strengthens, nurtures itself, and goes forth to fulfil the work marked out by Providence for the life.

I. Jacob's heart fainted; but old men, dying persons, often feel that some unrealised object detains them here. Jacob was like watchers who have gone to the point and taken lodgings, to be the first to hail the ship; and as pennon after pennon flutters in sight they hail it, but it is not the expected vessel, and the heart faints, until at last the well-known signal waves in the wind. Sense sees it, and faith revives.

II. The lesson of the patriarch's history is that faith may not realise all it desires, but it may realise what confirms, revives, and assures. "He saw the wagons": "Faith cometh by hearing"; it is a moral principle created in the mind, not so much by facts as probabilities. Faith is moved and swayed by antecedental considerations. So these wagons were, in all probability, an aid to faith, and his heart revived. Treasure up marks and tokens of another country; you will find they will not be wanting.

III. If you deal faithfully with the tremendous hints and probabilities sacred to your own nature, sacred to the Holy Word, sacred to the infinite manifestation of God in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, they will hold you fast in the power of awful convictions, and in the embrace of infinite consolations. The wagons assured Jacob that Joseph was yet alive, and there are innumerable conveyances of grace which assure us that Jesus is yet alive.

E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 161

I. But for the provision Joseph sent them for the way, Jacob and his sons' sons and daughters could never have crossed the hot desert. But the impossible had been made possible by the command of Pharaoh and the love of Joseph. The journey was accomplished successfully, the desert was traversed without peril, without excessive fatigue, by means of the wagons sent out of the land of Egypt. When Jacob saw the wagons his heart revived.

II. Let us apply this to our Lord and to ourselves. Jesus Christ, the true Joseph, remembers us in His prosperity, and He sends an invitation to us by the desire of God the Father, who loveth us. He does not bid us come to Him in our own strength, relying only on the poor food which a famine struck

land yields—does not bid us toil across a burning desert, prowled over by the lion, without provision and protection. There are sacraments and helps and means of grace, which He has sent to relieve the weariness of the way, to carry us on, to support us when we faint, to encourage us lest we should despair.

III. Let us not despise the means of grace. We may not ourselves want them, but others do. Go in your own wagon, or on your feet if you can and dare, but upbraid not those who take refuge in means of transport you have not tried, or do not require. Those sacraments, those means of grace, those helps, ever new, yet old as Christianity, have borne many and many a blessed one along to the "good land," who is now resting in Goshen and eating the fat of the land.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 153.

Chap. xlv., ver. 28.—"And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

JOSEPH is a type or figure of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Joseph, in his younger days, was distinguished from his brethren by a purity of life which became the more observable in contrast with their dissolute manners, and caused an evil report to be sent to their father. His brethren saw him afar off, and conspired to kill him. In this we have a true picture of the Jews' treatment of Christ.

II. Joseph was carried down into Egypt, even as was Christ in His earliest days. Joseph was cast into prison, emblematic of the casting of Jesus into the grave, the prison of death; Joseph was imprisoned with two accused persons—the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh; Christ was crucified between two malefactors. It was in the third year that Joseph was liberated, and on the third day that our Saviour rose.

III. It is as a liberated man that Joseph is most signally the type of our Redeemer. Set free from prison, Joseph became the second in the kingdom, even as the Redeemer, rising from the prison of the grave, became possessed in His mediatorial capacity of all power in heaven and earth, and yet so possessed as to be subordinate to the Father. Joseph was raised up of God to be a preserver of life during years of famine. Christ, in His office of mediator, distributes bread to the hungry. All men shall flock to Jesus, eager for the bread that came down from heaven.

IV. Joseph's kinsmen were the last to send into Egypt for corn, just as the Jews have been longest refusing to own Christ

as their deliverer. But prophecy is most explicit, that as Joseph was made known to his brethren, so the Jews shall behold in Christ the promised Messiah, and worship Him as their all in all.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1489.

REFERENCES: xlv. 28.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 374. xlvi. 1-6.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 137. xlvi. 1-27.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 231. xlvi. 2.—A. F. Barfield, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 12 xlvi. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 133. xlvi. 28—xlvii. 10. —R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 242. xlvi.-l.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 202. xlvii. 1-10.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 137. xlvii. 3, 9.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 279. xlvii. 7-10.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 556.

Chap. xlvii., vers. 5, 6.—"And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, etc."

THE land of Goshen may be designated as the Netherlands of Egypt. When the first settlers rested there, it was in the immediate neighbourhood of the court. The Israelitish life there must have been a life of villages. The Egyptian government, fearful of this people even scattered abroad, would never have permitted them to consolidate their strength in large towns. It was a region of coarse plenty, a rich pastoral country; it was also a frontier land and an exposed province. It formed the Delta of the Nile, and was well called "the best of the land."

I. The villages of Goshen illustrate the mysterious path of divine purposes. Without that residence in Goshen we cannot see how Israel could have inherited its holy land; for Israel was not to be like Ishmael, a mere horde of bandit warriors, or a wandering race of unsettled Bedouins. The race was to exist for a purpose on the earth, and from the years of the discipline of despotism a spirit would infiltrate itself into the vast multitude; a mind, a Hebrew mind, would be born, fostered, and transmitted.

II. It is to the villages of Goshen that believers may turn to find how, when circumstances look most hopeless and men are most helpless, they are not forgotten or forsaken of God; how in the night-time of a nation's distress the lamp of truth may somewhere be burning brightly.

III. There was safety in Goshen. There came a time when God in a very fearful manner arose for the deliverance of His Church. The firstborn throughout the land of Egypt died, and there was a great cry throughout the land; but Israel was safe.

E. Paxton Hood, *The Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 405.

References: xlvii. 8.—D. King, *Memoir and Sermons*, p. 265; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 280. xlvii. 8, 9.—M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 108.

Chap. xlvii., ver. 9.—"**And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, etc.**"

Those who looked only on the outer life of Jacob would scarcely have thought that his days were either few or evil. It was conscience that spoke out in these words—conscience, which so often throws a reflected sadness over our estimate of things.

I. The helpfulness of Jacob's character is this—that it is the history of a bad man, of a man who started with every disadvantage of natural character and training, but who notwithstanding became eventually a good man.

II. The one redeeming point in Jacob's character—that which (humanly speaking) made him capable of better things, and enabled him to rise above his brother Esau and above his former self—was his faith. The great difference between Esau and Jacob was this: the former lived only in the visible and tangible world; his horizon was bounded by the narrow limits of our merely earthly life; but Jacob lived in a far wider world, a world which included spiritual interests and spiritual personages. This was why Esau sold his birthright—Jacob bought it. The same faith which caused him to value the birthright afterwards was the means of his salvation. His long and painful schooling, his wrestling with the angel at the ford of Jabbok, would have been impossible but for his faith, his grasp of spiritual realities. If Esau had had a vision of God and of angels, and of a ladder reaching up to heaven, he might have been frightened for the moment, but he would have shaken off the thought of it directly he awoke; the keenness of his appetite, the necessity of getting breakfast, would have been to him the realities of the hour. If one had wrestled with him through the night he might have fled in wrath, or died in obstinacy; but he would never have divined that that strong foe was a friend in disguise—he would never have thought of asking and extorting a blessing.

III. Jacob was saved by faith, and this is the way in which we are to be saved also. Faith is the handle whereby grace takes hold of us. Without faith it is impossible to please God, because unless we realise the unseen we are in fact shut up within the world of sense—we are shut out from God and He from us.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 36.

THE patriarch called his days few and evil, not because his life was shorter than his fathers', but because it was nearly over. When life is past, it is all one whether it has lasted two hundred years or fifty. And it is the fact that life is mortal which makes it under all circumstances equally feeble and despicable.

I. This sense of the nothingness of life is much deepened when we contrast it with the capabilities of us who live it. Our earthly life gives promise of what it does not accomplish. It promises immortality, yet it is mortal; it contains life in death and eternity in time, and it attracts us by beginnings which faith alone brings to an end.

II. Such being the unprofitableness of this life viewed in itself, it is plain how we should regard it while we go through it. We should remember that it is scarcely more than an accident of our being—that it is no part of ourselves, who are immortal. The regenerate soul is taken into communion with saints and angels, and its "life is hid with Christ in God." It looks at this world as a spectator might look at some show or pageant, except when called upon from time to time to take a part.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 214; also *Selection* from the same, p. 341.

REFERENCES: xlvii. 9.—A. Raleigh, *Thoughts for the Weary*, p. 241; J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 336; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 377; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., pp. 535, 553. xlvii. 11-28.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 254. xlvii. 13-26.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 91; M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 209. xlvii. 27.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 153. xlvii. 29-31.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 259. xlvii.-xlix.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 545; Parker, vol. i., p. 346.

Chap. xlviii., vers. 1—7.

JACOB looked back on his life and saw but three things—God, love, grief. These were all he had to speak of. They were a trinity of the past; they dwarfed everything else.

I. "God appeared unto me at Luz." This one first and great

appearance of God was memorable in all his life, because it was the first. It stamped itself upon his life; even in old age the memory of it was not obscured, effaced, or weakened, but was with him in the valley of the shadow of death.

II. Less august, but even more affecting, was the second of his three experiences—love. Of all whom he had known, only two names remained to him in the twilight between this life and the other—God, and Rachel. The simple mention of Rachel's name by the side of that of God is itself a monument to her.

III. The third of these experiences was that Rachel was buried. When Rachel died the whole world had but one man in it, and he was solitary, and his name was Jacob.

Application.—(1) See how perfectly we are in unity with the life of this, one of the earliest men. How perfectly we understand him! How the simplest experiences touch us to the quick! (2) The filling up of life, however important in its day, is in retrospect very insignificant. (3) The significance of events is not to be judged by their outward productive force, but by their productiveness in the inward life. (4) In looking back through the events of life, though they are innumerable, yet those that remain at last are very few,—not because all the others have perished, but because they group themselves and assume moral unity in the distance.

H. W. Beecher, *Sermons* (1870), p. 217.

Chap. xlviii., vers. 15, 16.—"And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, etc."

When St. Paul wished to select from the history of Jacob an instance of faith, he took the scene described in the text, when Joseph brings his two sons to the deathbed of his father. The text is therefore to be considered as one in which faith was signally exhibited.

I. Jacob seems to make it his object, and to represent it as a privilege, that he should take the lads out of the family of Joseph, though that family was then one of the noblest in Egypt, and transplant them into his own, though it had no outward distinction but what it derived from its connection with the other. Faith gave him this consciousness of superiority; he knew that his posterity were to constitute a peculiar people, from which would at length arise the Redeemer. He felt it far more of an advantage for Ephraim and Manasseh to be counted with the tribes than numbered among the princes of Egypt.

II. Observe the peculiarity of Jacob's language with regard to his preserver, and his decided preference of the younger brother to the elder, in spite of the remonstrances of Joseph. There was faith, and illustrious faith, in both. By the "Angel who redeemed him from all evil," he must have meant the Second Person of the Trinity; he shows that he had glimmerings of the finished work of Christ. The preference of the younger son to the elder was typical of the preference of the Gentile Church to the Jewish. Acting on what he felt convinced was the purpose of God, Jacob did violence to his own inclination and that of those whom he most longed to please.

III. Jacob's worshipping (referred to in Hebrews xi.) may be taken as proving his faith. What has a dying man to do with worshipping, unless he is a believer in another state? He leans upon the top of his staff as if he would acknowledge the goodness of his heavenly Father, remind himself of the troubles through which he had been brought and of the Hand which alone had been his guardian and guide.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2261.

REFERENCES: xlviii. 15, 16.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 274. xlviii. 16.—J. Wells, *Bible Children*, p. 69; J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 131; A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 186; J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*, p. 133. xlviii. 21.—J. P. Gledstone, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 152; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii, p. 379; S. A. Brooke, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 265; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1630. xlviii. 22.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 153. xlix.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 175. xlix. 1.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, pp. 1, 13. xlix. 1, 2.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 554. xlix. 1-12.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 275. xlix. 1-27.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 171. xlix. 3, 4.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 53; J. C. M. Bellew, *Five Occasional Sermons*, p. 19. xlix. 8-12.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 219.

Chaps. xlviii. and xlix. (with Deut. xxxiii. and Judges v.)

JACOB'S blessing of his sons marks the close of the patriarchal dispensation. Henceforth the channel of God's blessing to man does not consist of one person only, but of a people or nation. As the patriarchal dispensation ceases it secures to the tribes all the blessing it has itself contained. The distinguishing features which Jacob depicts in the blessing of his sons were found in all the generations of the tribes, and displayed themselves in things spiritual also.

In these blessings we have the history of the Church in its

most interesting form. The whole destiny of Israel is here in germ, and the spirit of prophecy in Jacob sees and declares it. (1) Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted as sons of Jacob. No greater honour could have been put on Joseph than this: that his sons should be raised to the rank of heads of tribes, on a level with the immediate sons of Jacob. He is merged in them, and all that he has earned is to be found not in his own name, but in theirs. (2) The future of Reuben was of a negative, blank kind: "Thou shalt *not* excel"; his unstable character must empty it of all great success. (3) "Simeon and Levi are brethren," showing a close affinity and seeking one another's aid, but for bad purposes, and therefore they must be divided and scattered in Israel. This was accomplished by the tribe of Levi being distributed over all the other tribes as the ministers of religion. The sword of murder was displaced in Levi's hand by the knife of sacrifice. (4) Judah is the kingly tribe; from it came David, the man who more than any other satisfies man's ideal of a prince. (5) Zebulon was a maritime tribe; always restlessly eager for emigration or commerce. Issachar had the quiet, bucolic contentment of an agricultural or pastoral population. (6) "Dan shall judge his people." This probably refers to the most conspicuous of the judges, Samson, who belonged to this tribe. The whole tribe of Dan seems to have partaken of the grim humour with which Samson saw his foes walk time after time into the traps he set for them—a humour which comes out with singular piquancy in the narrative of one of the forays of this tribe, in which they carried off Micah's priest, and even his gods. (7) Gad was also to be a warlike tribe; his very name signified a marauding, guerilla troop, and his history was to illustrate the victories which God's people gain by tenacious, watchful, ever renewed warfare.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 173.

REFERENCES: xlviii.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 236; J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 23; R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 265. xlix. 1, 2.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 554.

Chap. xlix., ver. 4.—"Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

I. THE first thing which strikes us in the instability of water is that it has no cohesive shape of its own. It takes the form of the vessel into which you pour it; it changes one form for another without resistance; and water spilt on the ground

falls asunder and vanishes. This suggests the first defect of instability,—that it prevents a man gaining an independent position in life. There is a true position in the world which we should all aim at, a place where we may stand on our own feet, fill our own sphere, and meet all the just claims which come upon us in the family, in friendship, and in society. This cannot be gained without some measure of stability. If, indeed, there is entire instability in the ground of the character, it is very difficult to deal with, and if men were under fixed laws of nature the case might be incurable. But nature has its emblems of hope even for this indecision; there is a possibility of crystallising water.

II. Another thing in the instability of water is the changefulness of its reflexion. Look at the water in an outspread lake. It takes moon and stars and changing seasons into the depths of its confidence, and its seeming depths are only a surface. This is beautiful in nature, but very unhappy in men; and we may see in it an illustration of how instability unfits us for gaining either true culture or character.

III. A third thing we may mention in the instability of water is that it inspires distrust. Its very calm is danger: there are hidden rocks under the smoothness, and treacherous currents which wind like serpents round those who trust them. This reminds us that instability destroys influence. The world is governed not so much by men of talent as by men of will.

IV. Water is ready to move any way but upward. It descends, but cannot rise to its source; and it illustrates this most serious defect of instability, that it unfits a man for a successful endeavour after the higher life.

In seeking to conquer instability there must (1) be a sincere desire to escape from this defect where it is felt. (2) In arriving at decision, a man should seek to ascertain what he is capable of. (3) There are helps in this struggle against indecision: (*a*) Method or system; (*b*) associations; (*c*) the taking an early and manly stand.

J. Ker, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 49.

The Holy Spirit is here describing the character of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob. He is acknowledged, indeed, as the firstborn, but at the same time he is given to understand that he has forfeited his right; he is now to have no pre-eminence or authority over his brethren; he is not to excel. This

passage may well lead us to serious reflection on the great and peculiar danger of unsteadiness.

I. This verse was written especially for the learning of those among Christians who have good feelings, who feel something of the beauty of holiness, who admire it, and are shocked at crime in others. All of us are by nature more or less partakers in these feelings; but we may, if we will, neglect to cherish them, and then they will die away and do us no good.

II. The true and faithful Christian is marked by nothing more certainly than by his firmness and decision of purpose. He makes good resolutions and keeps them. He sets his face like a flint, and is not ashamed. A Christian without stability is a miserable wonder in the sight of God and His angels.

III. Perseverance—a kind of bold and generous obstinacy—is a necessary part of Christian goodness. There is no excelling without it: nay, so many are the snares and dangers which surround us, that there is no chance, but by it, of keeping even the lowest place in God's kingdom.

IV. To all our other good purposes this one must be added,—we must resolve, by the grace of God, not to measure things by the judgment of men, but to go strictly by the rule of God's commandments. We must guard against that tendency, so natural to many, to exhaust their repentance and good meaning in feelings and professions and strong words, instead of going on without delay to the calm and sober keeping of the commandments. We must pray that He who holds our hearts in His hand may not suffer our repentance to be as unstable as water, pouring itself out in vain and useless lamentation.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times," vol. iv., p. 105.

References: xlix. 4.—J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 1875, p. 252; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 19; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 158.

Chap. xlix., vers. 5-7.—"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations," etc.

From the history of Simeon and Levi we learn in many ways the evil consequences of giving reins to our angry passions and wild desires. It is needful to consider this, for these passions and desires have great power over us—so great that we cannot depend on anything else to restrain them but

the principles of true practical religion made to sink into our hearts by the grace of God.

I. Consider the misery of those who set aside the love of God and the hope of His rewards, that they may gratify any desire of their own. (1) Of this number was Esau, who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat, and became a type of those who lose their heavenly birthright for the sake of worldly gain. (2) The same lesson is to be learned from the history of Shechem and Dinah, who lost the blessing and incurred God's displeasure by giving way to their evil passions. (3) Simeon and Levi formed a plan for executing a terrible vengeance on Shechem and all belonging to him for the disgrace they had sustained. Blinded by their passion, they did not see they were disgracing themselves more by their treachery and cruelty than they had been disgraced already by their sister's dishonour.

II. From this we learn: (1) the necessity of keeping a constant check and restraint upon ourselves; (2) the need of humbling ourselves for the sins of our past lives, and looking carefully into our present practice to see whether they do not still cleave to us in some form or other; (3) the need of God's Spirit to make clean what is within, to put off from us impurity and wrath, that our hearts may be fit for His indwelling.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times," vol. vii. p. 36.

References: xlix. 5-7.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 67. xlix. 8-12.—*Ibid.*, p. 97; J. Monro Gibson, *The Ages before Moses*, p. 219.

Chap. xlix., ver. 10.—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

I. Using the word prophecy in its predictive sense, this is the language of unquestionable prophecy.

II. This prophecy contains a revelation of Christ.

III. This revelation of Christ was connected with the announcement of the particular time when He was to appear.

IV. This announcement is connected with a statement showing in what way His people will come to Him. It is at once predictive and descriptive.

V. This statement suggests an inquiry into the design of Christ in gathering the people to Himself. In harmony with His title as "the Peaceful One," his grand design is to give

them rest. (1) Rest, by reconciling them to God. (2) Rest, by effecting the spiritual union of man with man. (3) Rest, by leading us to perfect rest in another world.

C. STANFORD, *Symbols of Christ*, p. 35.

IN the prediction now before us, we have three new points: a name for the seed of the woman; an approximate date of His coming; and an important effect of it.

I. The word Shiloh is the name either of a person or a place. In all other passages of Scripture it denotes the place where the tabernacle was set up after the conquest of the promised land; and in this sense it appears for the first time in Joshua xviii. 1. It was situated in Ephraim, about twenty miles north of Jerusalem. The obvious reference would be that it denotes the same place here. But (1) the person often gives name to the place; (2) the place is not mentioned till two hundred and forty years after the benediction was pronounced; (3) the sentence, if referred to the place, is neither important in itself, nor accordant with history. Shiloh means the safe—the safe-maker—the Saviour.

II. The date. The existence of Judah as a tribe continued only till the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Shiloh must have come in the period from the death of Herod the Great, 3 B.C., to that of Herod Agrippa, A.D. 44.

III. The gathering of the people unto Shiloh. The word here rendered gathering is in the Septuagint expectation. It means the gathering in faith and hope of all people to the Shiloh. He is to be the seed of Abraham and the source of all blessing. He is to come while Judah continues to have a corporate form and a native prince, and unto Him are the nations to gather once more into one.

J. G. MURPHY, *Book of Daniel*, p. 15.

REFERENCES: xlix. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1157; J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 232. xlix. 13-15.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 117. xlix. 15.—A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 104. xlix. 16-18.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 137.

Chap. xlix., ver. 18.—"I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

THESE words are a parenthesis in Jacob's long blessing of his sons. The old man seemed to have been exhausted with the thoughts and visions which passed over his mind in such quick succession. He paused to take a spiritual inspiration: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

I. Such chapters of life, such seasons of suspense, such exercises of the quiet confidences of the soul, are to be found in every Christian's experience. They may come in different ways to different men, but they are in some form or other a necessity to every man—an essential part of the discipline of the school of salvation.

II. These intervals of waiting must be filled up with four things: prayer, praise, fellowship, and work.

III. It will be a helpful thought to you as you wait, that if you wait, Christ waits. Whatever your longing is that the time be over, His longing is greater. There are many things that you have had that have turned to a curse, which would have been blessings if only there had been more "waiting."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 101.

I. FROM these few words we may learn what was the nature of that inheritance which the patriarchs regarded as bequeathed to them by the Divine promises. The patriarchs looked for salvation.

II. We learn from the text what had been the great characteristic of Jacob's life from the time that he was first brought under the power of Divine grace. His affections had been set on things above. His chief interest had lain in eternity.

III. The language of Jacob in the text proves most fully the truth elsewhere stated, that "the righteous hath hope in his death."

Practical questions: (1) Do you know what is meant by the salvation of the Lord? (2) Do you know what is meant by *waiting* for salvation—*i.e.*, ardently but patiently looking forward to it? (3) Do you know what is meant by *preparing* while you wait for the salvation of the Lord?

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 147.

REFERENCES: xlix. 18.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 8; R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 285.

Chap. xlix., ver. 19.—"He shall overcome at the last."

CONSIDER: I. Faith triumphant in doubt. The Gospel is a revelation. It is the telling of a secret. There is not one mystery either about man or about God which has been either caused or aggravated by the Gospel. Doubtless there are matters not yet revealed. There are unexplained, perhaps inexplicable difficulties, as regards God's will and man's future,

which the Gospel leaves where it found them. Faith triumphs in and over doubting; and when Christ asks, "*Will ye also go away?*" is content to answer, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*"

II. Faith triumphs in disappointment. Faith triumphs amidst and over baffled hopes and wasted toils. To be willing to wait, even for encouragement, much more for victory, is an essential part of his character who has seen the promise afar off, and been persuaded of it, and embraced it, and who now lives day by day in the calm, humble looking-for of a light that shall arise and a rest that is reserved in heaven for God's people.

III. Faith conquers sin. That is our most urgent want, and that is Faith's most solemn office. Faith conquering is, above all things, Faith conquering sin, Faith looking upwards to a loving Saviour, and drawing down from Him the desire and the effort and the grace to be holy.

IV. Faith conquers Death. If Death is not dreadful to the Christian, he owes the difference simply to the fact that in that other world, as we vaguely term it, there is already for him a Father and a Saviour and a Comforter—One whom it has been the joy of his soul to commune with here, and the strength of his life to find real, to find near, and to find all love and strength and grace.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Voices of the Prophets*, p. 114 (also *Good Words*, 1866, p. 826).

REFERENCES: xlix. 19, 20, 21.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessing of the Tribes*, pp. 149, 173, 185. xlix. 19-32.—R. S. Candlish, *The Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 300. xlix. 22-26.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessing of the Tribes*, p. 195.

Chap. xlix., vers. 23, 24.—"The archers shot at him, but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

THESE picturesque words are part of one of the oldest pieces of poetry in the Bible—the dying Jacob's prophetic blessing of his sons. Of these sons, there are two over whom his heart seems especially to pour itself—Judah, the ancestor of the royal tribe, and Joseph. The text contains in vivid metaphor the earliest utterance of a very familiar truth.

I. Strength for conflict by contact with the strength of God is the lesson it conveys. The word here rendered "made strong" might be translated "made pliable" or "flexible,"

conveying the notion of deftness and dexterity rather than of simple strength. It is practised strength that He will give, the educated hand and arm, master of all the manipulation of the weapon.

II. The text not only gives the fact of Divine strength being bestowed, but also the manner of the gift. What boldness of reverent familiarity there is in that symbol of the hands of God laid on the hand of the man. A true touch, as of hand to hand, conveys the grace. Nothing but contact will give us strength for conflict and for conquest. And the plain lesson, therefore, is—See to it that the contact is not broken by you. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

A. Maclaren, *Week-day Evening Addresses*, p. 72.

References: xlix. 23, 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 17; I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 67.

Chap. xlix., ver. 24.—"The mighty God of Jacob. From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel."

These three names which we find here are striking and beautiful in themselves; in their juxtaposition; in their use on Jacob's lips. Look at them as they stand.

I. The Mighty God of Jacob. The meaning of such a name is clear enough. It is He who has shown Himself mighty and mine by His deeds for me all through my life. The very vital centre of a man's religion is his conviction that God is his. The dying patriarch left to his descendants the legacy of this great Name.

II. The Shepherd. That name sums up the lessons that Jacob had learned from the work of himself and of his sons. His own sleepless vigilance and patient endurance were but shadows of the loving care, the watchful protection, the strong defence, which "the God who has been my Shepherd all my life long" had extended to him and his.

III. The Stone of Israel. Here, again, we have a name that after-ages have caught up and cherished, used for the first time. The Stone of Israel means much the same thing as the Rock. The general idea of this symbol is firmness, solidity. God is a rock (1) for a foundation; (2) for a fortress; (3) for shade and refreshment. None that ever built on that Rock have been confounded. We clasp hands with all that have gone before us. At one end of the long chain this dim figure of the dying Jacob stretches out his

withered hands to God, the Stone of Israel; at the other end we lift up ours to Jesus and cry:—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

A. MACLAREN: *Week-day Evening Addresses*, p. 81.

REFERENCES: xlix. 24.—S. Cox, *The Sunday Magazine*, 1873, p. 640; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 53. xlix. 28.—M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 172; W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 190; F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 13. xlix. 29.—J. M. McCulloch, *Sermons on Unusual Subjects*, p. 134. xlix. 29-33.—Bruce, *Modern Scottish Pulpit*, p. 223. xlix. 33.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 306; G. Woolnough, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 410; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., p. 783. l. 1-13.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., pp. 306, 317. l. 12, 13.—F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 187. l. 14.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 190. l. 15-21.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 176. l. 15-26.—W. M. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister*, p. 206. l. 19, 20.—M. Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*, p. 231.

Chap. L., ver. 20.—"Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good."

In this study of the Divine mode of conduct, we shall find (1) a light for the interpretation of the ways of Providence; (2) an example to be followed.

I. God permits evil, but from the evil He unceasingly causes good to proceed. If good were not destined to conquer evil, God would be conquered, or rather God would cease to be. This law appears full of light when we read the history of such men as Joseph, Moses, and David; and it is nowhere more evident than in the life of Jesus Christ. Here evil stands out in its most appalling intensity, and from that very excess comes forth the salvation of mankind.

II. Since the Scriptures call us to be imitators of God, like Him we must endeavour to draw good out of evil. For believing souls there is a Divine alchemy. Its aim is to transform evil into good. Evil, considered as a trial, comes from three different sources: it comes either from God, through the afflictions of life; from men, through their animosity; from ourselves, through our faults. We may learn Divine lessons from sorrow, lessons of wisdom from our enemies; we may even gather instruction from our faults.

E. BERSIER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 380.

REFERENCES: l. 20.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 382; W. M. Taylor, *Limitations of Life*, p. 249. l. 22-26.—R. S. Candlish, *Book of Genesis*, vol. ii., p. 335. l. 24-26.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 304; F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis*, p. 191; W. Bull, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 371.

Chap. l., ver. 25.—"Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

This is the one act of Joseph's life which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews selects as the sign that he too lived by faith. It was at once a proof of how entirely he believed God's promise, and of how earnestly he longed for its fulfilment. It was a sign of how little he felt himself at home in Egypt, though to outward appearance he had become completely one of its people. The ancestral spirit was in him true and strong, though he was "separate from his brethren." This incident, with the New Testament commentary on it, leads us to a truth which we often lose sight of.

I. Faith is always the same, though knowledge varies. There is a vast difference between a man's creed and a man's faith. The one may vary—does vary within very wide limits; the other remains the same. What makes a Christian is not theology in the head, but faith and love in the heart. The dry light of the understanding is of no use to anybody. Our creed must be turned into a faith before it has power to bless and save.

II. Faith has its noblest office in detaching from the present. All his life long, from the day of his captivity, Joseph was an Egyptian in outward seeming. He filled his place at Pharaoh's court; but his dying words open a window into his soul, and betray how little he had felt that he belonged to the order of things in which he had been content to live. He too confessed that here he had no continuing city, but sought one to come. Dying, he said, "Carry my bones up from hence." Living, the hope of the inheritance must have burned in his heart as a hidden light, and made him an alien everywhere but upon its blessed soil. Faith will produce just such effects. Does anything but Christian faith engage the heart to love and all the longing wishes to set towards the things that are unseen and eternal? Whatever makes a man live in the past and in the future raises him; but high above all others stand those to whom the past is an apocalypse of God, with Calvary for its centre, and all the future is fellowship with Christ and joy in the heavens.

III. Faith makes men energetic in the duties of the present. Joseph was a true Hebrew all his days; but that did not make him run away from Pharaoh's service. He lived by hope,

and that made him the better worker in the passing moment. True Christian faith teaches us that this is the workshop where God makes men, and the next the palace where He shows them. The end makes the means important. This is the secret of doing with our might whatsoever our hand finds to do—to trust Christ, to live *with* Him and *by* the hope of the inheritance.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons Preached in Manchester*, p. 130.

REFERENCE: I. 26.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 370

EXODUS.

Chap. i., ver. 6.—"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation."

I. Joseph was still a son, though lord over Egypt (Gen. xlv. 9—11). His heart yearned over his father with all a child's clinging trustfulness.

II. Jacob's heart fainted, for the news was to him too good to be true. There is in life an element which is constantly upsetting probabilities; thus calling men up from lethargy. The news was too romantic at first for Jacob; but he always had an eye for the practical, and when he saw the wagons, his heart revived (vers. 25—28).

III. In the meeting of Joseph with his father there is a beautiful combination of official duty and filial piety. Joseph is administrator of the resources of Egypt; he cannot abandon his position and go away to Canaan. but he goes part of the way to meet his father (xlvi. 29, 30).

IV. Jacob summed up his earthly life by calling it a pilgrimage. His days seemed few and evil when he looked back upon them. We get to see the brokenness of the life, its incompleteness, its fragmentariness, when we get to the end of it (xlvii. 7—9).

V. The last scene of this eventful history is given us in the text. (1) Joseph died. The best, wisest, and most useful men are withdrawn from their ministry. The world can get on without its greatest and best. The death of Joseph was a national event, an event of wide importance. (2) His brethren died. There we begin to lose individuality; we cannot all be equally conspicuous, each cannot have his name written in history as having died. The great thing is to leave behind us, not a mere name, but influences that hearts will feel.

Parker, *The City Temple*, 1871, p. 161.

References: i. 6.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, p. 9. i. 10-12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 997. i. 12.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 385. i.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 1; Parker, vol. ii., p. 17. i. 8-11—ii. 5-10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 50, 53. i.-ii.—G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 42. ii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 19. ii. 1-3.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 24. ii.

3.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 1. ii. 5-15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 55. ii. 6.—T. Champness, *Little Foxes*, p. 72. ii. 6-9.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 250. ii. 10.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 26. ii. 1-10.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 7.

Chap. ii., ver. 9.—"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

I. To none is God's commendation vouchsafed more fully than to those who love children for Christ's sake. The presence of childhood represents and brings back our own. It is then that our Divine Master seems to repeat His words in our ears, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Children confide in those around them with a sweet and simple faith. They obey from affection, and not from fear. And so our Father, which is in heaven, would have His children trust Him, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us.

II. Children teach us reverence as well as faith. They listen to us with a solemn awe when we talk to them of God. They tread softly, they speak with bated breath, in His holy place. Our age has need to learn from them that we cannot serve God acceptably without reverence and godly fear.

III. Children teach us to be kind, pitiful, and tender-hearted. They cannot bear to witness pain. They do all they can to soothe. Have we these sorrowful sympathies? Do we "keep the child's heart in the brave man's breast"?

IV. If the love of Christ is in our hearts, it should constrain us to do our very best, thoughtfully, prayerfully, generously, to preserve in the children and to restore in ourselves that which made them so precious in His sight, and makes them so like Him now—like Him in their innocence, their sweet humility, their love.

S. R. Hole, *The Family Churchman*, Jan. 12th, 1887.

References: ii. 9.—J. Van Dyke, *The Christian at Work*, June 17th, 1880; see also *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 24; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 274; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 193; J. Wells, *Bible Children*, pp. 81, 95. ii. 11-15.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 24. ii. 12.—J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 245. ii. 16-iv. 17.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 41. ii. 23.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 113. ii.-iv.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 17. iii.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 129. iii. 1-2.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 70. iii. 1-4.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 97. iii. 1-5.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 302. iii. 1-6.—W. Jay, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 127.

Chap. iii., ver. 1-14.

THIS narrative is a chain of glorious wonders. We see here—

I. An old man called to go out on the great errand of his life. The education of Moses for the great mission of his life lasted eighty years. God never sends forth fruit until the season is fitted for the fruit, and the fruit for the season; when the hour was ready for the man, and the man for the hour, then God sent forth Moses.

II. The burning bush from which that call was sounded. (1) This was a sign to indicate the peculiar presence of God. (2) It was also a symbol of His people, eminently adapted to encourage the prophet in undertaking their cause.

III. The angel who uttered this call. We see at the first glance that He is Divine; we next learn that He is an angel; we further find, from a chain of Scripture proofs, that He is Christ.

IV. The covenant under which the Angel gave him his commission. It was the same covenant that had been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

V. The Angel's name. That name asserts (1) His real existence, (2) His underived existence, (3) His independent existence, (4) His eternity.

VI. The effect to be wrought by the remembrance of His name. (1) It was intended to inspire profoundest reverence for the Being to whom it belongs. (2) It reveals the infinite sufficiency of a Christian's portion. (3) It gives encouragement to Evangelical enterprise.

C. STANFORD, *Symbols of Christ*, p. 61.

REFERENCES: iii. 1-14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 57. iii. 1-15.—A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 107. iii. 1-22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 141. iii. 2.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 20; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 79; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 185; *The Weekly Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 312; D. J. Vaughan, *The Days of the Son of Man*, p. 209; H. Varley, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 369; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 145; J. Jackson Wray, *Light from the Old Lamp*, p. 231.

Chap. iii., vers. 2-6.—"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," etc.

I. THE vision. (1) The vision was miraculous. (2) Moses had this vision when he was in solitude. (3) It was symbolic (*a*) of Israel in Egypt; (*b*) of the Church in the world; (*c*) of the truth of the Gospel; (*d*) of ourselves who have the religious life within us.

II. The voice. (1) It revealed the majesty and grandeur of God. (2) The voice revealed the special providence of the great God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (3) The voice proclaimed the faithfulness of God. (4) The voice demanded reverence.

T. JONES, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 220.

REFERENCE: iii. 2-6.—S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 70.

Chap. iii., ver. 3.—"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

I. THE story of Moses is the story, at first, of failure. Two great streams of influences moulded his life, the one drawn from the Egyptian surroundings of his early days, the other drunk in with his mother's milk and his mother's teaching. On the one side he had the speechless-eyed deities of Egypt looking for ever into his face, on the other he had a belief in the governing providence of God. He expected to find amongst his own people aspirations after better things, and responsiveness to his own spirit, but he met with chilliness, coldness, and refusal to follow. Then came his exile in Midian, an exile from all his early dreams and hopes, from the position he had in Egypt, from the future which flowed before him.

II. The vision was the revelation that restored him to faith and energy. The revelation was threefold. It was a revelation (1) of permanence, (2) of purity, (3) of personal power. A revelation of permanence, for the bush was not consumed; it held its own life amidst the devouring flame. A revelation of purity, for before he could enter into the deep meaning of that vision, a voice had bidden him "put his shoes from off his feet, for the place on which he stood was holy." A revelation of personal power and love, for out of the distance, out of the background of the vision, giving it its heart and life, came the voice of Him who proclaimed Himself through all the changes and vicissitudes of the life of Israel, as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

III. The revelation was not for Moses alone. There is in every common bush the light of God, and only those see it who draw off their shoes. We forget to turn aside to see the great sights about us. If we give our hearts leisure to meet with God, God will meet with us.

BISHOP BOYD-CARPENTER, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 91.

REFERENCES: iii. 3.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 308. iii. 4.—H. Allon, *Congregationalist*, vol. viii., p. 469.

Chap. iii., ver. 5.—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

I. The essence of reverence lies in our forming a true estimate of our place amongst the powers around us, and so understanding aright and habitually feeling what is our relation to them. Now, to do this, (1) we must apprehend something of the mystery of life in ourselves and in others; (2) we must recognise the distinction of the different grades of being in those in whom life is, and seek to find and to keep our own due place in that mighty and marvellous scale of existences.

II. We must bow down before Him who is the fountain of all life, the life of all who live. This adoration of the soul before Him is the central point of the grace of reverence, and its influence pervades and adjusts all our other relations, both towards Himself and towards the other creature of His hand.

III. It is a question of the deepest moment to us all how, in an age one special temptation of which is clearly to lose its reverence, the gift can be kept quick and living in ourselves. (1) The first step must be the keeping guard against whatever tends to irreverence. All that professedly robs life of its mystery does this. So, even more directly, does all that robs revelation of its awfulness. Receiving God's word as God's word, striving to do it, striving to overcome temptations to doubt, not by crushing them out, but by turning them into occasions of prayer and of adoration, these efforts, and such as these, will keep us in an irreverent age from the great loss of irreverence. (2) Above all, we must pray for reverence as the gift of God; for such prayer not only draws down a certain answer, but even by its own action tends to put our spirits in the frame of reverence.

S. Wilberforce, *University Sermons*, p. 335.

References: iii. 5.—C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of Life and Godliness*, p. 114; W. J. Butler, *Sermons to Working Men*, p. 259; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 189. iii. 5.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 214; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year, Lent to Passiontide*, p. 336; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 25; *Congregationalist*, vol. vi., p. 428.

Chap. iii., ver. 7.—"I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt."

Quite apart from its religious significance, there is no other historical phenomenon that is to be compared for a moment in interest with this ever-growing wonder of the Jewish race. The light falls clearly and steadily on its history from first to last. The whole connected story lies before us like a mighty river,

which from some high mountain summit you can trace from its fountain to the ocean.

I. The history of this people is thus the history of mankind in its central seats of power. It brings with it living reminiscences of the remotest past. In order to understand how strange a phenomenon is this indomitable vitality of the race, a race without a home or a country, compare their history with that of the numberless tribes of other races who have been either migratory or settled. Excepting the Arabs, also Abraham's descendants, all the other settled contemporary races around Palestine have either died out completely, as the ancient people of Tyre, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt; or, if migratory, they have been lost and absorbed after a few centuries. The bond that has held the Jews apart from other nations, and yet together, has been their common religion, their common historical glory. When all Eastern Asia held evil to be incurable, and eternal, and Divine, the race of Abraham held that evil was "but for a moment," and that God's goodness and justice alone were eternal; and it is they who have taught this lesson to the nations of the modern world.

II. Notice next the tragic side of this wonderful national history. The honour of being the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the world for four thousand years, has been paid for by four thousand years of national martyrdom and humiliation. The terrific penalties announced at the beginning for failure in their national vocation amidst the great nations of the ancient world, have been exacted to the letter. The so-called Christian nations have made their lives for nearly fifteen hundred years one prolonged Egyptian bondage. New Testament Christianity has at last taught us English, at least, to love the nation to whom we owe such priceless blessings. We believe that the time is hastening on when Christ will return to avenge the quarrel of Israel, and to end "the times of the Gentiles" by the restoration of the scattered nation to its old central position in a renovated world.

E. WHITE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 65.

REFERENCES: iii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 229. iii. 7, 8.—M. G. Pearse, *Thoughts on Holiness*, p. 230. iii. 8.—J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 32.

Chap. iii., ver. 10 (with Heb. xi. 27).—"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt..... Moses endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."

I. How was the earlier history of Moses an education for the

great work of his life? In order to free his people from their bondage, Moses needed sympathy and faith; and the Bible gives us three phases of his life, wonderfully adapted to educate him in these qualities: (1) his education in the Egyptian court; (2) his attempt to convince the people of their brotherhood; (3) his flight into the wilderness.

II. How did this vision explain to Moses the work of his life? (1) The vision of God *prepared* him for the work of his life. It showed him the everlastingness of God, and his own unworthiness to do God's work. But the voice upheld him amid the overwhelming sense of his nothingness, and made him feel his vocation. The everlasting sympathy was with his people in their sorrows, and that thought upholding his sinking weakness, became a clear, strong call to action, and summoned him with the voice of the Eternal to his calling. (2) The vision of God gave endurance in fulfilling that work. "Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible." He had received the grand revelation of the name of God, which was to abide with him until his work was done: "I Am that I Am." This revelation of the name of God made him feel the glory of the vision as an ever-present power. Under that consciousness the sense of his own insignificance faded, his terror of Pharaoh passed away. Even though his work should seem to fail, that mighty vision had given him a grasp on eternity which would keep him strong and true.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 81.

REFERENCES: iii. 12.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 308; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 17; J. Hiles Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 40.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—**"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?"**

I. Moses on entering upon a great mission naturally inquires the conditions upon which he proceeds. Before going on any of life's great errands we should know (1) Who has sent us, and (2) What is the business on which we proceed.

II. In the revelation made to Moses, "I AM hath sent me unto you," we have *being* distinguished from *manifestation*. "I AM" is the summary of Being.

III. The answer which Moses received from Almighty God was an immutable *authority* for the greatest of missions. Only let us be sure that we are doing God's errand, and Pharaoh and

Cæsar and all names of material power will fall before us, never again to rise.

PARKER, *Wednesday Evenings at Cavendish Chapel*, p. 105.

REFERENCES: iii. 13.—A. Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 213.

Chap. iii., vers. 14, 15.—"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM," etc.

IN the long bondage of Israel the God of their fathers had become to the most a name, a faint echo, an image ever growing dimmer. They were in a country where countless gods were worshipped, where the forces and products of nature in all their changes were adored. The very conception of Deity was polluted and degraded by being associated with creeping things and monstrous shapes. How wise then that God should be presented to them as "I AM." "I AM THAT I AM,"—the Being who is, as essential life, inscrutable and unchangeable, and who was also the God of their fathers. God is thus set very high and yet He is brought very near, near in a way to appeal to the heart. To us the two aspects of God possess the same importance and interest. Let us look at them in several different lights.

I. God is the Incomprehensible One, and yet is revealed in His intercourse with men. The conviction of God's unsearchableness lies at the root of all reverence and awe. Before the "I AM THAT I AM" our spirits lie in deepest adoration and rise into loftiest aspiration. But we need equally the other side. We need a God revealed in the essential features of His character, and it is in His dealings with men who feared and loved Him that He has made Himself known.

II. God is the Independent and Absolute One, and yet He enters into covenant and most definite relationship with men. He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The great sea of His love has its channel and tides. His infinite love and mercy have their regular fixed ways not less than the sunshine.

III. God is the Eternal One, and yet the God of dying men. Every moment that we have of fellowship with the Eternal God assures us that for us there is no death. The thought of death only makes us cleave the more to the Eternal God.

IV. God is the Unchangeable One, yet the God of men of all different types and temperaments. He is the same Lord over all. Take these three patriarchs, so closely related in blood.

How different they were. Yet God was the God of all the three, for they all agreed in being seekers of God.

J. LECKIE, *Sermons Preached at Ibrox*, p. 35.

REFERENCES: iii. 14.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 156; *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 12, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 81; C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 132; J. Travers Sherlock, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 44; R. Heber, *Sermons Preached in England*, pp. 102, 124. iii. 14, 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 61. iii. 19, 20.—Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 239. iii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 31.

Chap. iv., ver. 1.—"**And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.**"

OUR duty to our Lord in this world requires that we should do somewhat more than live a life of obedience to Him. Our obedience must be acknowledged obedience. We must never be loth to say, "Whose we are, and Whom we serve." We may read this lesson writ large in the history of God's sending Moses to deliver His people. Moses went through a trial on Mount Horeb, the exact opposite of the trial of Christ.

I. Moses was tempted to decline the contest with the world altogether, to shrink from action and from prominence, when God called him. Christ was tempted to take the world by storm, to overwhelm it with conviction.

II. Moses was full of sympathy for the poor, full of a desire to see God's ancient promises realized; but when the time came, and God said, "Now go," then, for the first time, it flashed upon Moses that he was unfit to carry out what he had so aspired to be trusted with. His eighty years of life had been given him that in its vast experience he might learn that God was all, man was nothing. He *had* very nearly learned it in truth; the crust or chrysalis of self was very nearly ready to drop off; it needed just this interview with God to rid him of it entirely. He had seen the miraculous powers with which he had been endowed, but he had not fully understood them, and therefore his will was pausing still.

III. The voice of God within him and without him waxed more imperious. God sternly pointed out that such eloquence as he longed for was but a secondary qualification. "Thy brother, I know that he can speak well;" the legislator need not be the orator. There is not one of us who ever complained to God of insufficient strength without finding his complaint answered either by ministration of grace or disappearance of difficulties.

IV. What interests trembled in the balance while Moses was debating! It is not for ourselves only that we shall be responsible if we debate till the time is gone.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 212.

REFERENCES: iv. 2.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 233; S. Cox, *The Bird's Nest*, p. 179; F. Tucker, *Rainbow round the Throne*, p. 17.

Chap. iv., ver. 10 (with Judges vi. 15, Jer. i. 6, 1 Sam. ix. 21, Luke xiv. 18).—"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent," etc.

I. GOD proposes great things to men. In proportion as any call in life is great, let the heart pause and consider whether its very greatness is not a proof of its divinity.

II. We are not to look at what we are, but at what God is. When He calls He qualifies for the work.

III. What is right in itself may be perverted and abused. Timidity is right in itself, but it may be pushed into cowardice; then it becomes wrong. Self-distrust is right in itself, but if it degenerates into atheism, then it is the plague and destruction of the soul.

IV. God's call to faith is the greatest call to His universe. Our duty is to go forward to the unknown and the invisible, and live by faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight."

PARKER, *The City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 493.

REFERENCES: iv. 11.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2677. iv. 17.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year, Holy Week*, p. 463. iv. 18-vii. 7.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 61. iv. 20.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 388. iv. 21.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 44; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 148. iv. 22, 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1440.

Chap. iv., ver. 27.—"And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him."

THIS text shows us—

I. The brotherhood and affection subsisting between the different members of God's family. And this is twofold. God's people stand in a twofold relation to one another, as natural and spiritual men. As being creatures of God's hand, and common descendants of Adam, they are linked together in brotherhood. But the great brotherhood and bond of union between God's people is their brotherhood in Christ, their affinity to one another as redeemed by the same Blood, sanctified by the same

Spirit, and pursuing their pilgrimage towards the same heavenly city.

II. Notice the breaches of intercourse brought about in this world between those members of God's family who have seen and known one another in the flesh. (1) Many interruptions of intercourse are brought about by providential arrangements. (2) All direct communication between brethren in the Lord is cut off by death.

III. Consider the need of and consequent yearning after each other's society and assistance which, while parted, the members of God's family experience. The need is based upon, and flows from, their spiritual constitution in one body. We are, in the design of God, constituent parts of a whole, and we are continually evincing our consciousness of this truth.

IV. Consider the blissful reunion of the sundered members of God's family in the realms of glory. There shall be a day when all the yearnings of the Christian's heart after the society of his brethren shall be satisfied to the full, when his joy shall receive its entire complement in his recognition of and intercommunication with those whom he has known and loved in the Lord.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Sermons in the Parish Church of Holywell*, p. 205.

REFERENCES: iv. 27-31.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 63. iv.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 40.

Chap. v., ver. 1.—"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go."

THE history of the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of Egypt, their pilgrimage through the wilderness, and their ultimate settlement in the Land of Promise, bears a striking analogy to the history of the human soul.

I. The words "Let My people go," regarded as spoken concerning human souls, may be said to contain in themselves the whole gospel history of our redemption. Even the small word "My" is emphatic. We are God's people; not Satan's people. When God claims us we should remember that He claims His own, and that we are bound to support His claim. (2) The summons to let the people of God go implies a bondage from which they are to be delivered. That which forms the basis of Holy Scripture is the fact that man committed sin. He rebelled against his Maker, and became the slave of one to whom he owed no obedience. (3) If the words "Let My people

go" imply the existence of slavery, they still more emphatically imply the way and the promise of redemption. The Gospel of Christ, as preached throughout the whole world, is just this—"Let My people go."

II. The whole system of ordinances and sacraments, in which we find ourselves by God's providence, like the system of ordinances and sacrifices which was given to Israel when they came out of Egypt, are intended to insure and perfect and turn to the best account the liberty which the Lord has given us, for the soul of man may not be content with emancipation once and for all.

III. The consideration of what Jesus Christ has done for us is the chief means of moving our hearts to seek that liberty which God designs us all to possess.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 643.

REFERENCES: v. 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 65; Parker, vol. ii., p. 309.

Chap. v., vers. 22, 23.—"And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me?"

WHEN Moses saw the vision at Horeb, he had passed many more years in the world than Jacob at the time of his vision at Bethel; he knew much of which Jacob was ignorant, and had experienced a kind of sorrow which had never reached him. He had passed through the sore trial of feeling himself the member of an utterly degraded race, which he had dreamed of helping and could not help; in the very sufferings of which he was not allowed to share. He had an early inward intimation that he might unite and deliver this people. The intimation had come to nothing. He might call himself an Egyptian, a Midianite, an Ethiopian, as well as a Hebrew.

I. This education in an Egyptian court, in the family of a Midianitish priest, in an Ethiopian desert, was just the one which was to prepare him for understanding the vocation of a Hebrew in the world; just the one which was to make him fit for a deliverer and lawgiver of his people.

It required that he should be far from kinsmen and from country—from every external association with the covenant of his fathers—that he might hear and understand the words, "I AM THAT I AM;" that he might receive the assurance, "I AM hath sent thee."

II. Moses was called to be the deliverer and founder of a nation. Either that nation stood upon this Divine *Name*, or it

and all that has grown out of it are mockeries and lies from first to last. "The Lord God of the Hebrews, the God of our nation, the God of our family, has established and upholds the order of human existence and all nature," —this is the truth which Moses learnt at the bush; the only one which could bring the Jews or any people out of slavery into manly freedom and true obedience.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 154.

REFERENCES: v. 22, 23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 141; *Congregationalist*, vol. vii., p. 208. v.-xi. (xiv.)—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 31. vi. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1440. vi. 2, 3.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 93; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 211. vi. 3.—A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 123; Parker, vol. ii., p. 310. vi. 6-8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 145.

Chap. vi., ver. 8.—"I am the Lord."

CONSIDER the meaning of our duty to God; the great truth that we have such a duty; and how it comes about that we have it.

I. Duty is something which is due from one to another; something which ought to be given, or ought to be done; not a thing which is given or done under compulsion, under the influence of fear, extorted by force, not even a free gift or offering; quite different from this; if a thing is a duty, it must be done because it is right to do it and wrong to omit it.

II. The words of the text are, as it were, the sign manual whereby Almighty God, in His dealings with His ancient people the children of Israel, claimed from them the performance of that duty which they owed to Him. The words which gave validity to an Israelitish law merely rehearsed the fact that He who gave the law was Jehovah; and nothing more was added, because nothing more remained to be said.

III. Notice the principles upon which our duty to God depends. (1) There is a relationship, a close vital connection between God and man, which does not exist between God and any other of His creatures; man is in a very high sense "the Son of God," so that it is inconceivable that the true aims and purposes of God and man can be distinct. Man being made in God's image, *ought* to do God's will. (2) Our duty to God depends also on the ground of *election*. God deals with us now as with His Church in former days; it is still a Church of election. We, to whom God sends His commands, are still rightly described as redeemed out of the house of our bondage; and if the redemption

of Israel out of Egypt be nothing better than the faintest type and shadow of the redemption of mankind out of the power of the devil, how much greater is the appeal which is made to us on the ground of that deliverance which Jesus Christ has wrought out.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 4th series, p. 1.

REFERENCES: vi. 8.—M. G. Pearse, *Thoughts on Holiness*, p. 231. vi. 9.—W. Arnot, *Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life*, p. 327; Parker, vol. ii., p. 310; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, p. 494. vi. 27.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 311. vii. 1-14. —*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 67, 69.

Chap. vii., vers. 3, 4.—"I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt," etc.

THE text brings before us the two great results which God forewarned Moses would rise from the struggle between His will and that of the king. On the one hand, the tyranny was to be gradually overthrown by the sublime manifestations of the power of the Lord; on the other, the heart of Pharaoh himself was to be gradually hardened in the conflict with the Lord. Here two questions arise for consideration.

I. Why was the overthrow of Pharaoh's tyranny through the miracles of Moses so gradual? Why did not God, by one overwhelming miracle, crush for ever the power of the king? (1) It was not God's purpose to *terrify* Pharaoh into submission. He treats men as voluntary creatures, and endeavours by appealing to all that is highest in their natures to *lead* them into submission. (2) In his determination to keep Israel in slavery Pharaoh had two supports—his confidence in his own power, and the flatteries of the magicians. Through both these sources the miracles appealed to the very heart of the man. (3) The miracles appealed to Pharaoh through the noblest thing he had left, his own sense of religion. When the sacred river became blood, and the light turned to darkness, and the lightning gleamed before him, he must have felt that the hidden God of nature was speaking to him. Not until he had been warned and appealed to in the most powerful manner did the final judgment come.

II. We are told that the heart of Pharaoh was hardened by the miracles which overthrew his purpose. What does this mean? One of the most terrible facts in the world is the battle between God's will and man's will. In the case of Pharaoh we see an iron will manifesting itself in tremendous

resistance, the results of which were the hardening and the overthrow. There are three possible explanations of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. (1) It may be attributed entirely to the Divine Sovereignty. But this explanation is opposed to the letter of Scripture. We read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. (2) We may attribute it wholly to Pharaoh himself. But the Bible says distinctly, "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart." (3) We may combine the two statements, and thus we shall get at the truth. It is true that the Lord hardened Pharaoh, and true also that Pharaoh hardened himself.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 94.

REFERENCES: vii. 3.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 50. vii. 8-x. 29, 30.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 77. vii. 9.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 311. vii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 521, and *Evening by Evening*, p. 181.

Chap. viii., ver. 1.—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

I. PERFECT freedom is not the thing demanded of Pharaoh, nor is this the prize of their high calling held out before the eyes of the Israelites. To serve God is the perfect freedom held out: to change masters, to be rid of him who had no claim to their allegiance, and to be permitted without hindrance to serve Him who was indeed their Lord and their God. This was the boon offered to the children of Israel, and demanded on their account by Moses as the ambassador of God.

II. This feature in the deliverance of the Israelites is worthy of special notice, when we regard it as typical of the deliverance from sin and the bondage of the devil, which our heavenly Father is willing to effect for each one of us. "Let My people go,"—not that they may be free from a master, but that they may serve; let them go, because they have been redeemed by Christ, and are not their own, but His. The deliverance from sin which God works for His people is, in fact, a change from one service to another: a change from service to sin, which is perfect bondage, to service to God, which is perfect freedom.

III. The blessedness of the service of God is not estimated as it ought to be; men in these days are too like the children of Israel, who seemed to think that they had conferred a favour on Moses by following his guidance, and that the least reverse would be a sufficient excuse to justify them in going back again to Egypt. There is nothing in their conduct more strange or

more blameable than in the conduct of men calling themselves Christians, who do not perceive that in the earnest discharge of God's service is their highest happiness as well as their principal duty and most blessed privilege.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, series iv., p. 179.

REFERENCES: viii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 322. viii. 2.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 311. viii. 19.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 312; J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 174. viii. 20.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 312. viii. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1830. viii. 28.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 179; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1830; Parker, vol. ii., p. 313. ix. 1-35.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 144. ix. 7.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 325. ix. 13, 14.—C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, pp. 148, 164. xii. 12.—I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 103.

Chap. ix., vers. 13-19.—**"And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me," etc.**

THE message illustrates: I. The longsuffering of God towards sinners. Pharaoh had been insolent and blasphemous, cruel and vindictive, pitiless and false. Yet God had spared him. So longsuffering was He, that He even now addressed to him fresh warnings and gave Him fresh signs of His power, thus by His goodness leading men to repentance.

II. The power of God to break the will even of the most determined sinner. First He sends slight afflictions, then more serious ones; finally, if the stubborn will still refuses to bend, He visits the offender with "all His plagues."

III. The fact that all resistance of God's will by sinners tends to increase, and is designed to increase, His glory. "The fierceness of man turns to God's praise." Men see God's hand in the overthrow of His enemies, and His glory is thereby increased. The message sent by God to Pharaoh adds that the result was designed (see ver. 16, and cf. xiv. 17, 18, xv. 14-16; Joshua ii. 9-11).

G. RAWLINSON, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 223.

REFERENCES: ix. 16.—R. Heber, *Sermons Preached in England*, p. 146. ix. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 113. ix. 34, 35.—W. Denton, *The Sunday Magazine*, 1875, p. 97.

Chap. ix., ver. 35.—**"And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let Israel go, as the Lord had spoken by Moses."**

THIS part of the Book of Exodus is, in figure and shadow, the history of God's dealings with us all. Pharaoh is the type of

the prince of this world, the devil, and of the wicked world itself. As he kept the children of Israel in slavery, so does the evil spirit keep all God's people, so long as they are in their natural lost condition.

"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" is a very remarkable and startling expression, and it is repeated in this history no fewer than ten times. It is startling, for it seems at first sight as if it ascribed the sin of that wicked man to Almighty God. But a little thought will show that it is very far from meaning this.

I. In other places the hardening is attributed to Pharaoh himself. God gives bad men a mysterious power, to change their hearts and minds continually for the worse, by their own wicked ways; so that in the end they cannot believe or repent. It is their own doing, because they bring it on themselves by their sin, and it is God's doing because it is the just punishment which His law has made the effect of their sin.

II. God knew beforehand that the heart of Pharaoh was such that not even miracles would overcome his obstinacy, and knowing this, He determined to deal with him in a manner which ought to have softened and amended him, but which, according to his perverse way of taking it, only hardened him more and more.

III. The taking off of God's hand, after each successive plague, had the effect of hardening Pharaoh's heart more completely. He repents of his own repentance, and wishes he had not given way so far to God's messengers.

IV. Pharaoh, like other wicked kings, had no want of evil subjects to encourage him. He had magicians who counterfeited God's miracles, and servants who, on every occasion, were ready to harden their hearts with him.

Such is Pharaoh's case; beginning in heathenish ignorance, but forced by warning after warning to become aware of the truth. Every warning was a chance given him to soften his heart, but he went on hardening it, and so perished.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times," vol. vi., p. 49.

REFERENCES: x. 3.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 280; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 143. x. 8, 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1830.

Chap. x., ver. 16.—"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you."

THE words "I have sinned" occur nine times in the Bible,

and of the nine we may except two. In the seventh chapter of Micah they are the language not of an individual, but of a Church. And the prodigal's use of them is, of course, not matter of fact or history, but only part of a parable. Of the seven that are left, four are utterly hollow and worthless; in God's scale, wanting, unreal, and unprofitable. One of these was Pharaoh's.

I. At what time God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart began, it is impossible exactly to determine. But, from the first, it was judicial. It is a common story. A sin is indulged till the man is given over to his sin, then the sin is made its own punishment. It was no doubt in consequence of this hardness that Pharaoh's repentance was never anything more than one after a worldly sort. If we allow ourselves to go through hardening processes we shall ultimately put repentance out of our power.

II. Pharaoh's "I have sinned" was—(1) A mere hasty impulse. There was no thought in it; no careful dealing with his own soul; no depth. (2) The moving principle was fear. He was agitated: only agitated. Fear is a sign of penitence, but it is doubtful whether there was ever a real repentance that was promoted by fear only. (3) Pharaoh's thoughts were directed too much to man. He never went straight to God, and hence his confession was not thorough.

III. God accepts even the germs of repentance. Even Pharaoh's miserable acknowledgment had its reward. Twice, upon his confession, God stayed His hand. The loving Father welcomed even the approximation to a grace.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 71.

Chap. x., ver. 20.—"But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go."

I. THE simplest and most patient study of that portion of the Book of Exodus which refers to the Egyptian plagues will lead us to this conclusion, that Moses is the witness for a Divine eternal law, and the witness against every kind of king-craft or priest-craft which breaks this law, or substitutes any devices of man's power or wit in place of it. Moses protested against the deceits and impostures of the magicians, precisely because he protested for the living and eternal Lord. It is a special token of honesty and veracity that Moses records the success of the magicians in several of their experiments. We might fairly have discredited the story as partial and unlikely, if there

had been no such admission. Even the most flagrant chicanery is not always disappointed, and in nine cases out of ten, fact and fraud are curiously dovetailed into one another. If you will not do homage to the one, you will not detect the other.

II. Do not the words "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" distinctly describe God as the Author of something in man which is pronounced to be utterly wrong? Is He not said to have foreseen Pharaoh's sin, and not only to have foreseen, but to have produced it?

The will of God was an altogether good will, and therefore Pharaoh's will—which was a bad will, a proud self-will—strove against it, and was lashed into fury by meeting with that which was contrary to itself. These words of Scripture are most necessary to us, for the purpose of making us understand the awful contradiction which there may be between the will of a man and the will of his Creator; how that contradiction may be aggravated by what seemed to be means for its cure, and how it may be cured. However hard our hearts may be, the Divine Spirit of grace and discipline can subdue even all things to Himself.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 172.

REFERENCES: x. 22, 23.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 109. x. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 309, also vol. xxxi., No. 1830; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 476. x. 27.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, 2nd series, p. 316. xi. 1.—Parker, vol. ii., pp. 57, 313. xi. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 305; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 147.

Chap. xi., ver. 10.—"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land."

(1) IF I observe my own mind, one of the first powers of which I become conscious is the power to choose. This power is universally assumed as the ground of men's dealings with each other.

If we open the Inspired Book, we find the same fundamental assumption, that all men have a will and are responsible for their acts. "To him that knoweth to do good," says St. James, "and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (2) On the other hand, it is a fact as well attested, although by a different kind of evidence, that God is the king of all the earth. The world is governed, the laws of matter, of life, of individual and social action are so arranged, as to produce order and harmony.

I. The reality of the human will, and consequently of responsibility is attacked on different sides; here on physiological and there on historical grounds. We are told that facts connected with the human will admit of exact calculation and prediction, according to what is termed the law of averages, and that consequently the doctrine of free will, which was never capable of proof, must be displaced by a doctrine recognising the certainty of human action. To this we answer—(1) the belief that man has the power to choose is so far from wanting proof that it has all the force which universal consent can give it. (2) This average, which is supposed to rule the will like a rod of iron, is itself the most variable. It yields under the hand like tempered clay. That which our will is now acting upon, which varies in different countries because the will of man has made different laws there, cannot be conclusive against the doctrine of free will.

II. The words of the text are not without their warning. They mean that God, who punishes sin with death, sometimes punishes sin with sin. At a certain stage in the sinner's dreary downward course, the Lord hardens his heart. God is not responsible for his sin, but when he has repelled the voice of conscience, and the warning of his Bible, and the entreaties of friends, then grace is withdrawn from him, and sin puts on a judicial character, and is at once sin and punishment.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, p. 325.

REFERENCES: xii. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1637. xii. 1-14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 124. xii. 1-29.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 160. xii. 1-39.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 122. xii. 1-42.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 211. xii. 1-51.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 95.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."

WE have here a new event, a new starting-point—a new epoch, and therefore a new era. That event was an emancipation, a redemption, an exodus. There were centuries behind of exile and servitude; of that experience which has been so characteristic of Israel, a sojourning which was no naturalisation, a dwelling amongst, without becoming of, another nation; estrangement therefore, isolation, solitude, even in populous cities, and amidst teeming multitudes. Now, all this is behind them. They are to quit the homeless home. Egypt behind, Sinai before, Canaan beyond; this is the exact account of the

position of Israel when the words of the text were spoken. Redemption was the starting-point of the new; from it all that follows shall take a new character, a new life.

I. The idea of a new start is naturally attractive to all of us. We are fatigued, we are wearied, we are dissatisfied, and justly so, with the time past of our lives. We long for a gift of amnesty and oblivion.

II. There are senses in which this is impossible. The continuity of life cannot be broken. There is a continuity, a unity, an identity, which annihilation only could destroy.

III. "The beginning of months" is made so by an exodus. Redemption is the groundwork of the new life. If there is in any of us a real desire for change, we must plant our feet firmly on redemption.

IV. When we get out of Egypt, we must remember that there is still Sinai in front, with its thunderings and voices. We have to be schooled and disciplined by processes not joyous but grievous. These processes cannot be hurried, they must take time. Here we must expect everything that is changeful, and unresting, and unreposeful, within as without. But He who has promised will perform. He who has redeemed will save. He who took charge will also bring through.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Words of Hope*, p. 65.

REFERENCES: xii. 1-20.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 66. xii. 2.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 313; A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 88. xii. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 30. xii. 5, 6.—G. Calthrop, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 347. xii. 7, 8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xxii., p. 204. xii. 11.—M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 305. xii. 11-14.—J. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 125.

Chap. xii., ver. 13.—"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

OUR interest in the Passover, as in most of the other institutions of the Levitical economy, consists in its relationship to higher institutions, and to a more hallowed provision; it consists in the prefiguration by them of our Surety and Saviour, who is at once the Surety and Saviour of universal man. There are three points in the analogy to be considered.

I. We, like the children of Israel aforetime, are in circumstances of sorrow. (1) They were in bondage. We also have been brought under bondage to sin, and our yoke is harder than theirs, for ours is heart-slavery, the iron has entered into our soul. (2) The Israelites were in circumstances of peril.

The Lord was about to execute in their sight His strange work of judgment. The transgressions of our race, the sins which we commit, expose us to consequences far more imminent, and far more terrible.

II. For us, as for the children of Israel of old, there is a remedy provided. The great doctrine of Atonement is here brought before us. As by the blood of the victim sprinkled upon the door-posts, seen by the destroying angel, wrath was averted from them and deliverance secured, so by the blood of Jesus, seen by Divine justice sprinkled upon our hearts, wrath is warded off from us, and everlasting salvation is secured. The cross is the meeting-place of God's mercy for the sinner.

III. As there is such a remedy there can be no other. For us as for them there is but one way of escape. "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

W. Morley Punshon, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 312.

References: xii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 228, also vol. xxi., No. 1251; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 22.

Chap. xii., vers. 22, 23.—"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason," etc.

The night of the Passover was "a night much to be remembered." Wherever a Jew exists it is to this night he points, as the proudest epoch in his people's history. The feast of the Passover is full of typical meaning. Notice, first, that this was a little judgment day. The children of Israel were to be delivered by a direct visitation of God. There are three great truths brought out in this narrative.

I. The universality of condemnation. God was going to save the Israelites, but before He saved them He must condemn them. He sent Moses with a message couched in the language of symbol, which clearly showed that the Israelites were guilty no less than the Egyptians. The lamb was to be the representative of the firstborn son, who must die for the sins of his family. The Israelite and the Egyptian are brought under one common charge of guilt, and there they all stand, "condemned already."

II. The great truth of substitution. God sends Moses to His people and bids them choose "for every family a lamb." The lamb was instead of the firstborn. Christ is the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

III. The third truth taught is appropriation. The Israelite would not have been safe if he had merely killed the lamb; he had to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and on the two sideposts. When we repose our confidence in the Person of Christ, we have taken the bunch of hyssop and dipped it in the blood, and from that moment we are safe.

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 1st series, p. 100.

References: xii. 23.—H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 330. xii. 26.—C. Wordsworth, *Occasional Sermons*, 7th series, p. 25; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 17; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 281. xii. 26, 27.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, 3rd series, p. 259. xii. 29-31.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 164. xii. 31.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 314 xii. 38.—*Ibid.*

Chap. xii., vers. 30-41 (with Matt. ii., ver. 15).

I. We cannot treat the Exodus as an isolated fact in history. Egypt is the type of the cunning, careless, wanton world, out of which in all ages God is calling His sons. The Exodus remained a living fact in history. The infant Jesus went down into Egypt, as the infant Israel went down, not to repeat the Exodus, but to illume afresh its fading lines. (1) The children of Israel were an elect race, because they were of the seed of Abraham: that constituted their distinctity. You are of the race of the second Adam, of the same flesh and blood as Jesus; and all who wear a human form and understand a human voice, God calls forth from Egypt; His voice calls to His sons, "Come forth to freedom, life, and heaven.' (2) You, like the Israelites, are called forth to the desert, the fiery pillar, the manna, the spiritual rock; and while you aim at Canaan, His will, His heart, are on your side.

II. Note the moral features of the Exodus. (1) There was a life in Egypt which had become insupportable to a man. That bondage is the picture of a soul round which the devil's toils are closing. (2) The Israelites saw the stroke of heaven fall on all that adorns, enriches, and nourishes a worldly life. (3) They had a Divine leader, a man commissioned and inspired by God. We have the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who in the house and the work in which Moses wrought as a servant, represents God as the Son. (4) We discern a condition of utter dependence on the strength and faithfulness of God. They and we were delivered by a Divine work. (5) Notice, lastly, the freedom of the delivered

Israelites; a broad, deep sea flowing between them and the land of bondage, and the tyrants dead upon the shore. Such is the glorious sense of liberty, of wealth, of life, when the deep sea of Divine forgiving love sweeps over the past and obliterates its shame.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 28.

Chap. xii., ver. 42.—"It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt," etc.

I. SCHOLARS have said that the old Greeks were the fathers of freedom; and there have been other people in the world's history who have made glorious and successful struggles to throw off their tyrants and be free.

But liberty is of a far older and nobler house. Liberty was born on the first Easter night, when God Himself stooped from heaven to set the oppressed free. Then was freedom born. Not in the counsels of men, however wise, or in the battles of men, however brave, but in the counsels of God and the battle of God. Freedom was born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the will of God, from whom all good things come, and of Christ, who is the life and the light of men and of nations, and of all worlds, past, present, and to come.

II. The history of the Jews is the history of the whole Church and of every nation in Christendom. The Jews had to wander forty years in the wilderness, and Christendom has had to wander too, in strange and blood-stained paths, for eighteen hundred years and more. For as the Israelites were not worthy to enter at once into rest, no more have the nation of Christ's Church been worthy. As the new generation sprang up in the wilderness, trained under Moses' stern law, to the fear of God, so for eighteen hundred years have the generations of Christendom, by the training of the Church and the light of the Gospel, been growing in wisdom and knowledge, growing in morality and humanity, in that true discipline and loyalty which are the yokefellows of freedom and independence.

C. KINGSLEY, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 149.

REFERENCES: xii. 42.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 337. xii.-xiv.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 47. xiii. 1-7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 37. xiii. 10.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 315; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1092; H. Grey, *A Parting Memorial*, p. 54. xiii. 13.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 381; Parker, vol. ii., p. 74.

Chap. xiii., vers. 14-17.—"And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage," etc.

THE Book of Exodus introduces that new epoch in the scriptural history of sacrifices when they began to be regulated by fixed laws, to be part of a national economy.

I. The offering of the firstborn was the dedication and consecration of the whole Jewish nation. The firstborn represented its strength, its vitality, its endurance. This act signified that its strength lay only in its dependence on God's strength, that its vitality came from the life which is in Him, that it would endure from generation to generation, because He is the same and His years fail not.

The calling of the Israelites was the calling to confess a Redeemer of Israel, a righteous Being who had brought out their fathers from the house of bondage.

II. Moses taught the people that by looking upon themselves as beings surrendered and sacrificed to the God of truth, the Deliverer of men, by feeling that they held all the powers of their minds and bodies as instruments for the great work in which He is engaged,—thus they might be a nation indeed, one which would be a pattern to the nations, one which, in due time, would break the chains which bound *them* to visible and invisible oppressors.

III. When once we understand that we are witnesses for God, and do His work, self-sacrifice can never be an ambitious thing—a fine way to get the reputation of saints or the rewards of another world. It will be regarded as the true ground of all action; that on which all the blessed relations of life stand; that which is at the same time the only impulse to and security for the hard and rough work of the world.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*, p. 49.

REFERENCES: xiii. 17, 18.—J. Jackson Wray, *Light from the Old Lamb*, p. 83; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 184; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 6. xiii. 17-19.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 316. xiii. 17-xiv. 4.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vi., p. 448.

Chap. xiii., ver. 18.—"But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea."

THESE words expound to us a whole philosophy of life. The way of the wilderness has become a household word in Christendom, and this decision of Jehovah is the proclamation

of the law of man's earthly life. God leads none of us by the rapid and easy path to knowledge, fortune, or happiness. The short way might bring us to rest and glory sooner, but the rest would relax and the glory blind us. We travel by a longer, harder path; that muscle may be disciplined by toil, courage assured by conquest and self-government, studied in many a season of shame and pain. Then the crown will fit us, rest will be calm and noble activity, and glory we shall wear like kings.

Among the special reasons why the Israelites were guided by the way of the wilderness, the following may be noted :—

I. They had been sated with the magnificence of man's works; God led them forth into the wilderness to show them His works in their native grandeur, and to refresh their exhausted hearts and spirits by the vision of the splendour of His world.

II. God led them forth by the way of the wilderness that He might reveal not nature only, but Himself. He led them into the wilderness, as He leads us, that He might meet with them, speak with them, reveal Himself to them, and teach them to know themselves in knowing Him.

III. God led them into the wilderness that He might there cultivate their manly qualities, and fit them to hold the possessions they might win.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 58.

References: xiii. 19.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 316. xiii. 21.—J. Jackson Wray, *Light from the Old Lamp*, p. 309. xiii. 21, 22.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 154. xiii. 22.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 391. xiii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 82. xiv.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., pp. 281, 442, vol. vi., pp. 232, 448. xiv. 10.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 92.

Chap. xiv., ver. 13.—"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

These words speak to us of the temper with which we should meet the great trials and crises of life, the temper which does all that can be done and leaves the result to God. Let us look at this temper or character and its opposite as they are seen working in politics, in religion, in the lives of individuals.

I. The question was once asked by an eminent thinker, whether nations, like individuals, could go mad. There certainly have been movements, like the Reformation or the French Revolution, of which no one could foretell the existence or power. But such

movements, like the cataclysms of geology, have been rare, and they seem likely to be rarer as the world goes on. Yet this is not the aspect of the world which our imagination presents to us. There are the two opposite poles of feeling, the one exaggerating, the other minimising actions and events; the one all enthusiasm and alarm, the other cynical and hopeless. The true temper in politics is the temper of confidence and hope. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Be patient, and instead of changing every day with the gusts of public opinion, observe how curiously, not without a Divine providence, many things work themselves out into results which we never foresaw.

II. A temper of confidence and repose is needed in matters of religion. The great changes in religious opinion during the last forty years have taken two directions—Rome and Germany. These changes are far from unimportant, but the temper of alarm and exaggeration is not the right way of dealing with them. Amid the changes of religious opinions and the theological discord which distracts the world, we may possess our souls in peace. If sometimes our ears are thrilled and our minds confused by the Babel of voices which dins around us, we may turn from without, and listen calmly to that voice which speaks to us from within, of love, and righteousness, and peace.

III. Let us apply the same principle to our own lives. We need to see ourselves as we truly are, in all our relations to God and to our fellow-men. We need to carry into the whole of life that presence of mind which is required of the warrior who in the hour of conflict is calm, and sees what he foresaw.

B. JOWETT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 193.

I. THESE words which to fleshly Israel must have seemed so strange, and which to weak faith echo so strangely still, contain two parts, a duty and a blessing. They were to "stand still," and so should they see the salvation of God. And this condition of blessing runs continually through the whole history of the Jewish and Christian Church. When God has tried His chosen servants or His chosen people, the most frequent trial perhaps has been this, whether they would tarry the Lord's leisure, be content to receive God's gift in God's way, hasten not, turn not to the right hand or the left, but "stand still" and see the salvation of God. By patient (the word implies suffering)

waiting for God, an unresisting resistance unto blood, did the Church take root in the whole world.

II. It is for instruction only that we may ask why God should so have annexed the blessing of conquest to enduring suffering, and made patience mightier than what men call active virtues. (1) It may be that it has some mysterious connection with the sufferings of Christ. Vicarious suffering may be so far well-pleasing to God as having a communion with the sufferings of His beloved Son, and doubtless it may make those who are partakers of it more capable of the communication of the merits and influence of His passion. (2) Then, also, it may be needful, in the wisdom of God, for the perfecting of His saints. As all trial implies pain, so the trial of the most precious vessels, it may be, is to be accompanied by pains proportionate. (3) It is evident, that so God's power and glory are most shown in averting suffering, or in crowning the enduring faith by His blessing. (4) Since man's self-will was the cause of his fall, God would thus teach him to renounce dependence upon himself, to quit his own wisdom and his own schemes, and do God's will.

E. B. PUSEY, *Nine Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*, No. ix.

REFERENCES: xiv. 13.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 66; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 206; G. Moberly, *Plain Sermons*, p. 256; A. Raleigh, *Rest from Care and Sorrow*, p. 186; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 541.

Chap. xiv., vers. 13, 14.

I. IT was not the children of Israel who had brought themselves out of Egypt. They were a set of poor crouching slaves. It was not Moses who brought them out. It was the Lord who brought them out. This was what the Passover told them on the night they left Egypt, what it was to tell all future generations. The Lord was fighting for them. They were simply to follow where they were led, to accept the deliverance which He gave them and to remember whence it came.

II. The most wonderful of God's processes of education was the institution of sacrifices and the whole economy which is connected with them. The ground of the national existence was laid in sacrifice. The killing of the lamb, the blood token upon the door, the consecration of all the firstborn, were the witnesses that the slaves of Pharaoh were redeemed to be the people of God. Sacrifice was not merely the redress of an evil: it was a return to the rightful, orderly state of each man and of

the people. The setting up of a self-will is the disturbance of order; the sacrifice or giving up of the will is the restoration of it. Therefore the sacrifices in the Book of Leviticus are not like the heathen sacrifices—schemes to bring about a change in the Divine mind. They proceed, just as much as the law proceeds, from that mind.

III. A Jew who ate the paschal lamb mainly that he might commemorate the destruction of the Egyptians or the favour shown to Israelites may have hoped that the same power which slew one enemy of the nation would slay another. Yet this hope must often have been feeble, for analogies are but poor supports to the heart when crushed by actual miseries. But he who counted it his chief blessedness to see God asserting His order through Egyptians and Israelites, in despite of the unbelief and rebellion of both, would naturally conclude that He who is and was and is to come would go on asserting His order till He had put down every enemy of it, till He had completely made manifest His "own character and purposes." The enemies of God's order are sensuality, self-will, selfishness. It is God's intention to wage perpetual war with these, till He has proved whether they or He are the stronger.

God must be the Deliverer in the least case as in the greatest. Man must be the instrument of deliverance. It must be a deliverance wrought by the Firstborn of many brethren for His brethren, by a High-Priest as the Representative of a society.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 186.

Chap. xiv., ver. 15.—"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

I. THE story from which these words are taken is a story of national progress. It is also one of supernatural progress. For us the supernatural is, in the highest and truest sense of the word, natural, for it is the revelation of the nature of God. We accept the possibility of the supernatural and miraculous, but all the more for that do we hold that if God interferes in the affairs of men miraculously, He will not do it capriciously, unnecessarily, wantonly. Upon the whole story of these Jewish miracles there is stamped a character which marks distinctly the reason for which they were wrought; that reason was the religious education of the world. By these miracles the Jew was taught that for nations and men there is a God, an eternal and a personal Will above us and around us, that works for righteousness. This great fact was taught him by illustrated

lessons, by pictures illuminated with the Divine light and so filled with the Divine colour that they stand and last for all time.

II. The lesson that seems definitely stamped on the story of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea is the lesson of fearlessness in the discharge of duty, of resolute walking in the way that we know to be God's way for us. We find this true: (1) in the case of individuals; (2) in the case of nations. For individuals and for nations God has appointed a law of progress. All who have ever striven to raise the tone of a nation's life, to bring the nation onward on the path that leads to peace and righteousness, have been preaching to mankind this great word of God's, "Go forward where God would have you go."

BISHOP MAGEE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 55.

Chap. xiv., ver. 15.—"Go forward."

PROGRESS is the great test of a Christian. It is not what we are absolutely, but what we are relatively, relatively to what we were. Religion must always be "a walk," and the child of God a traveller. Old things get further and further behind, and as they recede look smaller and smaller; new things constantly come into view, and there is no stagnation. The man, though slowly, and with much struggle, and with many humiliations, is stretching on to the ever-rising level of his own spiritual and heaven-drawn conscience.

I. We may be discouraged because of past failures. Still we have no choice but to go on. Life is made up of rash beginnings and premature endings. We have nothing for it but to begin again.

II. We may feel ourselves utterly graceless and godless. The remedy is, at once to determine to be a great Christian. We must aim at things far in advance. We must go forward.

III. Perhaps some great temptation or sin bars the way. Then we must not stand calculating. We must not look at consequences, but simply "go forward" to the new life of self-denial and holiness.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 15.

REFERENCES: xiv. 13-15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 152. xiv. 15.—C. J. Vaughan, *The Days of the Son of Man*, p. 231; *Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 17; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 120; J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, pp. 428, 436; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 2nd series, p. 52; S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 45; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 548; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 18; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 166. xiv. 15-31.—*Preacher's Monthly*,

vol. ii., pp. 130, 132. xiv. 16.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. iii., p. 320. xiv. 19, 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., **No. 1793.**

Chap. xiv., ver. 20.—"It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these."

THE guiding cloud severed the camp of Egypt from the camp of Israel. It marched between them. To the one it was God's presence, cheering despondency, comforting weakness, guaranteeing victory; to the other it was a perplexing, baffling, vexing apparition, betokening they knew not what, yet this at all events, that Israel had a friend, a guide, a comforter, and they must drive after him their chariots of earth, with such hope and such might as earth fighting against Heaven can muster.

I. Every word of God is at once a cloud and darkness to Egypt and a light by night to Israel. So far as revelation goes, it is to the believing what it calls itself—a light and a lamp. The real mysteries of our being were there before revelation: the mystery of life, the mystery of death, the mystery of an omnipotent God resisted, and the mystery of a holy God co-existent with evil. Whatever revelation does in reference to these aboriginal mysteries is in the *direction* of explanation.

II. Trinity Sunday is, in an especial sense, the Festival of Revelation. Trinity and unity are not contraries. The word Trinity was invented to preserve the unity. Trinity is tri-unity. The doctrine of the Trinity is this, that Holy Scripture, while tenaciously clinging to the unity, does present to us our Lord Jesus Christ as very God, and does present to us the Holy Spirit of God, not as a thing, but as a Person. Leave out of sight for one hour the Divinity of Jesus, and darkness settles again upon the soul which He died, which He lives, to redeem. Leave out of sight for one hour the personality of the Spirit, and darkness settles again upon the soul of which He is the Light, because the Life. We may listlessly dream or purposelessly loiter; but when a work is proposed to us, and we must do it or die, then we want that help, and must have it, which only a Trinity in unity can supply.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Half Hours in the Temple Church*, p. 143; also *Good Words*, 1870, p. 747.

REFERENCE: T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 114.

Chap. xiv., vers. 30, 31.—"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."

HAD it not been for this great deliverance, the children of Israel

would only have been remembered in the after-history of the world as the slaves who helped to build the Pyramids. Their religion was fast perishing among them, their religious rites forgotten; and they would soon have been found among the worshippers of the monster gods of Egypt. But God had better things in store for them when He led them through the Red Sea, making a path for them amid the waters.

I. It was one of the greatest blessings for the human race that during the preservation of the Jewish people the great truth of the personality of God and His nearness to His people was set before them in language which could not be mistaken. And it is one of the greatest blessings which we enjoy that we have the same Lord thus personally presented to us, revealed in the risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

II. God is set before us in this passage, not only as a Person, but as a Person who cares with all a father's love, with all a father's watchfulness, for His own people. Our hopes in days of doubt and difficulties are directed to the same personal fatherly care of the great God who loves all His creatures, and who loves Christians above all in the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. When a great national victory is achieved, what boots it to him who loses his life in the hour of victory? The question for us is, not whether God has wrought a great deliverance, but whether we as individuals are partakers of that deliverance, partakers of the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. C. TAIT, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3, 100.

REFERENCES: xiv. 30, 31.—J. Jackson, *Sermons at St. Paul's*, No. 22. xiv. 31 (with xix. 7 and xxxvi. 5).—Parker, vol. ii., p. 100. xiv.-xv.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 127. xv. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1867. xv. 1-21.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 106. xv. 1-22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 162. xv. 2.—Bishop Thorold, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 40; Parker, vol. ii., p. 317.

Chap. xv., ver. 3.—"The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name."

THESE words are part of an outburst of national song, the triumphant song of God's chosen people when they, by God's strength, escaped from the tyranny of Egypt, and found themselves a redeemed, free, delivered people. The Lord has continued to exercise His triumphant power in the Christian Church. The standard of spiritual life in individual Christians at the present day warrants the expectations which have been awakened by the first promises of the Gospel. It is possible to look at this in two or three aspects.

I. The thought of God's triumphs as a man of war seems to be valuable as giving in its degree a proof of the truth of Holy Writ. The moral expectations raised by our Lord's first sermon on the Mount are being actually realized in many separate souls now. The prayer for strength to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh is becoming daily more visibly proved in the triumph of the Spirit, in the individual lives of the redeemed.

II. The triumphs of the Lord in the individual hearts among us give an increasing hope for unity throughout Christendom. We cannot deny the debt we owe to the labours of Nonconformists in the days of the Church's lethargy and neglect. We cannot join them now, but we are preparing for a more close and lasting union, in God's own time, by the individual progress in spiritual things.

III. We must do our part to set our seal to the triumphant power of Divine grace. It is the half-lives of Christians which are such a poor proof of the truth of our Lord's words. They do not begin early enough; they do not work thoroughly enough. We have the promise that this song shall be at last on the lips of all who prevail, for St. John tells us in the Revelation that he saw those who had overcome standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

BISHOP KING, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 569.

REFERENCE: xv. 6.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 34.

Chap. xv., vers. 9-11.—"The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil," etc.

ISRAEL was, in the first place, delivered from the hand of God, and then, as the result of this, Israel was delivered from the hand of Pharaoh.

Consider: I. The state of the Israelites when Moses came to them. (1) They were in bondage. (2) They were so far conscious of the misery of their position that they had a strong desire for liberty. (3) They were by no means ready at first to accept the message of God's deliverance. (4) They had their comforts even in slavery. In all these things we have a picture of ourselves.

II. The deliverance. (1) The moment the Passover is observed, that moment Pharaoh's power is broken. The moment that all is right between us and God, that moment Satan's power is broken, and he can no longer hold us in

bondage. (2) The waters of judgment which saved the Israelites were the means of destroying the vast host of Egypt. The power of Satan is broken by the very means by which he intended to destroy. (3) It is our privilege to take our stand on the other side of the Red Sea and see ourselves "raised up with Christ" into a new life.

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 1st series, p. 121.

Reference: xv. 22-35.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 113.

Chap. xv., vers. 23-27.—"When they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter," etc.

From the story of Marah we learn these lessons:—

I. The water was deleterious, not distasteful only. Had the people drunk it, it would have wrought disease, but it was healed by the obedience of Moses to God's directions. So if we are attentive and obedient to His voice He will find us remedies from all things that might hurt us.

II. It was not possible, perhaps, that the children of Israel should, by persevering in the unwholesome draught which is there typical of sin, have vitiated their taste till they delighted in it. But it is too possible in the antitype.

III. Though we are compelled by God's providence to pass through difficulty and temptation, we are not doomed to dwell there. If we are faithful, it is but in passing that we shall be endangered. If we use the remedy of obedience to God's word to-day, to-morrow we shall be beside the twelve ever-springing fountains, and under the shade of the palm-trees of Elim.

Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 197.

We have in our text a parable of the deep things of Christ.

I. Israel was in those days fresh from their glorious deliverance out of Egypt; they had sung their first national song of victory; they had breathed the air of liberty. This was their first disappointment, and it was a very sharp one, from the height of exultation they fell almost at once to the depths of despair. Such disappointments we have all experienced, especially in the outset of our actual march, after the first conscious sense of spiritual triumph and freedom.

II. Of us also it is true that God hath showed us a certain tree, and that tree is the once accursed tree on which Christ died. This is the tree of life to us, although of death to Him.

III. It was God who showed this tree unto Moses. And it was God who showed it to us in the Gospel. Applied by our faith to the bitter waters of disappointment and distress, it will surely heal them and make them sweet. Two things there are about the tree of scorn which will never lose their healing power—the lesson of the Cross and the consolation of the Cross; the example and the companionship of Christ crucified.

IV. The life which found its fitting close upon the Cross was not a life of suffering only, but emphatically a life of disappointment. Here there is comfort for us. Our dying Lord must certainly have reflected that He, the Son of God, was leaving the world rather worse than He found it in all human appearance.

V. Whatever our trials and disappointments, let us use this remedy; it will not fail us even at the worst.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 46.

REFERENCES: xv. 23-25.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 20; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 540; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 987. xv. 23-27.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 453; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 275. xv. 23-xvi. 36.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 128. xv.-xviii.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 61. xv. 24, 25.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on the Parables*, p. 257. xv. 25.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 177; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 185. xv. 26.—A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 161; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1664; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 394; Parker, vol. ii., p. 319. xv. 27.—T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 314. xvi. 1-8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 459.

Chap. xvi., ver. 4.—"That I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or no."

THERE can be nothing more sobering than the truth that this life is a state of trial and preparation for another. There is at the same time something wonderfully satisfying in the idea. It puts life before us in a point of view which satisfactorily explains it.

I. This account of the end of life simplifies matters in our journey through life. The principle of trial as the end of life shoves aside a multiplicity of irrelevant ends to make way for the true one; it reduces the purpose of life to the greatest possible simplicity, reduces it, as we may say, to a unit—to the effect upon the individual himself, what he does and how he turns out under these circumstances. The idea of probation thus gives a singular unity to the whole design and

plan of life. It throws the individual upon himself as the rationale of the whole.

II. The principle of the end of life being probative applies mainly to all the ordinary external advantages of life and our pursuit of them; but it also affects another and less ordinary class of human objects—the objects connected with the good of others, those useful and benevolent works and those public religious works which good men propose to themselves. There is one defect to which good men are liable: they become too much absorbed in the success of their own plans. The important truth for such men to realize is this very principle, viz., that of the end of life being trial. If they brought this truth home to themselves, they would see that the only important thing to them was, not that a useful undertaking should answer, but that they should have done faithfully their best for that purpose.

III. God makes use of us as His instruments, but the work that we do as instruments is a far inferior work to that which we do to fulfil our own personal trial. The general end of life, as trial, is superior to all special ends; it is the end which concerns the individual being, his spiritual condition, his ultimate prospects.

J. B. MOZLEY, *Sermons Parochial and Occasional*, p. 287.

REFERENCES: xvi. 6-8.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 191. xvi. 7.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 75; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 58. xvi. 21.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 198. xvi. 29.—T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 319. xvi.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 119; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 134. xvii. 1-16.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 149. xvii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 712. xvii. 8-13.—W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 320; J. S. Bartlett, *Sermons*, p. 236. xvii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 112. xvii. 10-13.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 330. xvii. 11.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Holy Week*, p. 472. xvii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 107.

Chap. xvii., ver. 13.—"And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."

I. AMALEK, as we learn from Deut. xxv. 18, had "smitten the hindmost, even all that were feeble." The stragglers are always a temptation to the foe. The hindmost and the feeble are sure to be the first attacked, and therefore should have special care.

II. Joshua discomfited *Amalek*, not Moses or some other

friend. Let us keep our bitterness for sin, and our swords for the King's enemies.

III. Amalek is not to be beaten without a fight. The struggle against sin is real, as we shall find to our cost if we are not wary.

IV. Moses was for each minding his own work, Joshua to fight, and himself to take the top of the hill.

V. Moses on the hill is an emblem of public prayer. There is a mystery about prayer that we cannot unravel. One of the bravest of Christian soldiers, scarred with many a fight, said, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands."

VI. How much even the mightiest of men are dependent upon others much weaker than themselves. It was well for the fortunes of the day that Moses was not alone.

VII. An altar marked the place of battle, and glory was given to the Lord of hosts. The soldiers of the Cross should call the battle-fields where they have won their bravest fights by the name of Him to whom they ascribe all might and majesty.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 66.

Chap. xvii., ver. 15.—"Jehovah-nissi, the Lord my banner."

I. THE fight with Amalek was Israel's first battle, and God made it to them the revelation of the mystery of all battles—the unseen spiritual things on which depend the final issues of all struggles and the progress of the world. (1) The main purpose of Israel's history is the revelation of the unseen influences which mould the character and guide the progress of all people or minister to their decay and death. (*a*) The first apparent condition of success was the courage and skill of the commander and of the troops. The successes of life are to the capable, the brave, the enduring; but—and here is the great lesson of Rephidim—they are to capacity, courage, and energy married to, and not divorced from, the fear and the love of God. (*b*) There was a second and higher condition. Joshua fought while Moses was praying, and while he knew that Moses was praying. The people had a conscious hold on the strength of the arm of God. (2) It may be fairly asked if in all battles the victory is with those who can not only fight, but pray. The answer is that it is only on a very large scale that we can trace the ways of God. Yet we may say that in any conflict the best reinforcement, that which stands a man in best stead and raises

the surest hope of victory, is the assurance that God is on his side.

II. The text is the revelation to us of the mystery of the great battle in which we are all combatants, the battle of life. "Jehovah-nissi" must be our watchword if we would not doom ourselves to go down before the foe. (1) The Lord is our banner against self, that baser part of us which is ever ensnaring, enslaving, and dragging us down into the pit. (2) The Lord is our banner against the world. (3) The Lord is our banner against the devil.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 235.

REFERENCES: xvii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 132. xviii. 1-27.—W. M Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 164.

Chap. xviii., ver. 7.—"They asked each other of their welfare."

I. THIS world is not a scene adapted or intended to afford the pleasure and benefit of friendship *entire*. Men cannot collect and keep around them an assemblage of congenial spirits, to constitute, as it were, a bright social fire, ever glowing, ever burning, amidst the winter of this world. They cannot surround themselves with the selectest portion of humanity, so as to keep out of sight and interference the general character of human nature. They are left to be pressed upon by an intimate perception of what a depraved and unhappy world it is. And so they feel themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth.

II. It is contrary to the design of God that the more excellent of this world's inhabitants should form together little close assemblages and bands, within exclusive circles, detached as much as possible from the general multitude. On the contrary, it is appointed that they should be scattered and diffused hither and thither, to be useful and exemplary in a great number of situations; that there should be no large space without some of them. Thus it is a world that dissociates friends. Nevertheless friends do sometimes meet; and then it is quite natural to do as Moses and Jethro did: "ask each other of their welfare."

In the meeting of genuine friends, after considerable absence, these feelings will be present: (1) Kind affection. (2) Inquisitiveness. "They asked each other." (3) Reflective comparison; not an invidious, but an instructive, one. (4) Gratitude to God for watching over them both. (5) Faithful admonition and serious anticipation.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, 2nd series, p. 208.

REFERENCES: xviii. 7.—A. K. H. B., *Towards the Sunset*, p. 127.

xviii. 13-26.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Notebook*, p. 52. xviii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 141

Chap. xviii., vers. 17, 18.—"And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee," etc.

Various lessons may be gathered from the fact that Moses was wearing himself away by undue application to the duties of his office, and that by adopting Jethro's suggestion and dividing the labour he was able to spare himself and nevertheless equally secure the administration of justice.

I. We see the goodness of God in His dealings with our race in the fact that labour may be so divided that man's strength shall not be overpassed, but cannot be so divided that man's strength shall be dispensed with.

II. It is a principle sufficiently evident in the infirmity of man that he cannot give himself incessantly to labour, whether bodily or mental, but must have seasons of repose. We shrink from the thought and the mention of suicide, but there are other modes of self-destruction than that of laying hands on one's own person. There is the suicide of intemperance; there is also the suicide of overlabour. It is as much our duty to relax when we feel our strength overpassed, as to persevere while that strength is sufficient.

III. God has, with tender consideration, provided intervals of repose, and so made it a man's own fault if he sink beneath excessive labour. What a beautiful ordinance is that of day and night! What a gracious appointment is that of Sunday! When the Sabbath is spent in the duties that belong to it, its influence gives fresh edge to the blunted human powers.

IV. Each one of us is apt to be engrossed with worldly things. It is well that some Jethro, some rough man from the wilderness, perhaps some startling calamity, should approach us with the message, "The thing that thou doest is not good; thou wilt surely wear away."

V. At last we must all wear away, but our comfort is that, though the outer man perish, the inner man shall be renewed day by day.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1512.

References: xix. 1.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 182; Parker, vol. ii., p. 147. xix. 1-6.—D. J. Vaughan, *The Days of the Son of Man*, p. 197. xix.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 202. xix., xx. —*Ibid.*, p. 204.

Chap. xx., vers. 1, 2.—"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

THE Ten Commandments hold a conspicuous position in that prolonged revelation of Himself, of His character, His will, and His relations to mankind, which God made to the Jewish people. They can, therefore, never become obsolete. The changing circumstances of the human race cannot destroy the significance and worth of any institutions or facts which reveal the life of God.

I. The Ten Commandments rest on the principle that God claims authority over the moral life of man. He claimed that authority in the earliest times. He claims it still.

II. There can be no doubt that God intended that these commandments should be kept. This may seem an unnecessary observation; but there are many religious people who have quite a different theory than this about the intention of Divine laws. They suppose that the commandments of God are principally intended to bring us to a sense of our guilt, and to suggest to us the sins for which we have to ask God's forgiveness. The thought of actually obeying them, and obeying them perfectly, scarcely ever occurs to them.

III. These commandments deal chiefly with actions, not with mere thought or emotion. Man is not a pure intellect or a disembodied passion. God's laws, which deal with man as he is, take large account of his external conduct. His actions are as truly part of his life as his thoughts and passions, his faith or unbelief, his sorrow for sin and his joy in the infinite love of God.

IV. Before God gave these commandments to the Jewish people, He wrought a magnificent series of miracles to effect their emancipation from miserable slavery and to punish their oppressors. He first made them free, and then gave them the law.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xx. 1-3.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 19; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 1. xx. 1-17.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 199.

Chap. xx., vers. 2, 3.—"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out o the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

I. THIS commandment does not tell the Jew that the gods worshipped by other nations have no existence; it tells him that

he must offer them no homage, and that from him they must receive no recognition of their authority and power. The Jew must serve Jehovah, and Jehovah alone. This was the truest method of securing the ultimate triumph of monotheism. A religious dogma, true or false, perishes if it isnot rooted in the religious affections and sustained by religious observances. But although the First Commandment does not declare that there is one God, the whole system of Judaism rests on that sublime truth, and what the Jews had witnessed in Egypt and since their escape from slavery must have done more to destroy their reverence for the gods of their old masters than could have been effected by any dogmatic declaration that the gods of the nations were idols.

II. The First Commandment may appear to have no direct practical value for ourselves. It would be a perversion of its obvious intention to denounce covetousness, social ambition, or excessive love of children. These are not the sins which this commandment was meant to forbid. It must be admitted that there is no reason why God should say to any of us, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." If He were to speak to many of us, it would be necessary to condemn us for having no god at all. The appalling truth is, that many of us have sunk into Atheism. We all shrink from contact with God. And yet He loves us. But even His love would be unavailing if He did not inspire those who are filled with shame and sorrow by the discovery of their estrangement from Him, with a new and supernatural life.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 21.

REFERENCES: xx. 1-11.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 137. xx. 1-17.—*Ibid.*, p. 207. xx. 2.—*Ibid.*, p. 222; A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 128; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, pp. 1, 14.

Chap. xx., ver. 3.—"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

THIS was the commandment broken by Adam and Eve in Paradise; they obeyed the voice of the devil, and took him for their god instead of their heavenly Father. Since that time the devil has been called the god of this world and the prince of this world, because men have commonly obeyed him and hearkened to his voice. Even the one family and nation to whom God revealed Himself were quite as unwilling as the rest of the world to serve Him alone, and so they needed this commandment.

I. It may be asked why it is necessary to say, "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me," because we know that there is no

other god at all. If we do not worship and serve God, yet we cannot give His honour to another, for there is no other to give it to. The reason is this, that all those false gods and false religions are ways in which the devil is worshipped and served, for whenever we fall away from the worship and service of God, we fall into his power; we take him for our god.

II. What Satan requires is only, as it were, that we should once serve him. Such was his temptation to our Lord, to Adam and Eve, to Daniel, to the first Christian martyrs. On the other hand, God requires our whole service. As long as there is any single point in which we are acting contrary to the law of God, no other service we can do will be acceptable to Him. Satan would have us but once worship and serve other gods, because we thus become so polluted in our heart and conscience as to be unfit to serve God at all.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. i., p. 240.

REFERENCES: xx. 3.—S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, pp. 53, 66; J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 152; J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 22.

Chap. xx., vers. 4, 5.—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," etc.

THE First Commandment condemns the worshipping of false gods; the Second condemns the making of any image or symbol even of the true God.

I. It would have been natural for the Jews to do this. They had many traditions of Divine revelations made to their ancestors. They might have attempted to perpetuate in a visible and permanent form the impressions which His supernatural acts had made upon their imagination and their hearts. They actually did it, for the golden calf was not intended to represent any false god, any deity worshipped by heathen races, but Jehovah Himself. It was the symbol of the God who had brought them out of Egypt.

II. The fundamental principle of this commandment has authority for us still. The whole history of Christendom is a demonstration of the peril and ruin which come from any attempt to supplement by art and by stately and impressive rites the revelation which God has made of Himself in Christ.

III. The justice of the penalty which is denounced against those who transgress this commandment it is very easy to dispute. The crime is to be punished not only in the men who are personally guilty, but in their descendants. The answer

is: (1) The same unity of race by which the results of the virtue and genius of one age are transmitted to the ages which succeed it renders it inevitable that the results of the folly and vice of one age should be entailed on the ages which succeed it, and (2) the commandment shows that the righteousness of men endures longer than their sin. The evil which comes from man's wickedness endures for a time, but perishes at last; the good that comes from man's well-doing is all but indestructible.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 40.

REFERENCES: xx. 4-6.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 188; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 53; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 18; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, pp. 79, 92. xx. 5.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, pp. 144, 153; J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, p. 104. xx. 5, 6.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 3rd series, p. 1.

Chap. xx., ver. 7.—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

THE name of God stands for Himself and for that which He has revealed of Himself, not for our thoughts about Him. It is not surprising that this great name was invested with a superstitious sanctity. Even the Jews used it rarely. There is a tradition that it was heard but once a year, when it was uttered by the high-priest on the great day of atonement. In reading the Scriptures it became customary never to pronounce it, but to replace it with another Divine name, which was regarded as less awful and august. The Third Commandment requires something very different from this ceremonial homage to His name. His name stands for Himself, and it is to Him that our reverence is due.

I. We may transgress the commandment in many ways: (1) by perjury; (2) by swearing; (3) by the practice of finding material for jesting in Holy Scripture; (4) by the habit of scoffing at those who profess to live a religious life, and taking every opportunity of sneering at their imperfections.

II. It is not enough to avoid the sin of profanity; we are bound to cultivate and to manifest that reverence for God's majesty and holiness which lies at the root of all religion. We have to worship Him. It is the "pure in heart" who see God, and only when we see God face to face can we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 64.

REFERENCES: xx. 7.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 163; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 71; S.

Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 104; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 35; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, 1st series, p. 260. xx. 7-11.—A. W. Hare, *Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 347. xx. 8.—R. Newton, *Bible Warnings: Addresses to Children*, p. 214; Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 89; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 115; C. Wordsworth, *Occasional Sermons*, 6th series, p. 29; J. Percival, *Some Helps for School Life*, p. 186; C. Girdlestone, *Twenty Parochial Sermons*, p. 227.

Chap. xx., vers. 8-11.—"Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy," etc.

The early reference to the Sabbath in the Book of Genesis is no proof of its early institution, for there can be no doubt that in the Pentateuch Moses felt himself at perfect liberty, while using ancient traditions and documents, to introduce additions, explanations, and comments of his own. Although there are many references to *weeks* in the Book of Genesis, there is not a solitary passage which even suggests that the patriarchs kept the seventh day or any other day as a Sabbath. Even if such a commandment had been given to Adam and recorded in Holy Scripture, it could not have any greater authority for us than the commandment given to the Jews. The Jewish revelation has become obsolete, because a nobler revelation has been made in Christ; but the Jewish revelation itself was nobler than any previous revelation, and if Moses has vanished in the Diviner glory of Christ, all that preceded Moses must have vanished too. Dismissing, therefore, all arbitrary fancies as to a primitive Sabbath, consider the characteristics of the Sabbath as given to the Jews: (1) The Jewish Sabbath was founded on a definite Divine command. (2) The particular day which was to be kept as a Sabbath was authoritatively determined. (3) The purpose of the day was expressly defined. (4) The manner in which the Sabbath was to be kept was very distinctly stated. (5) The sanction which defended the law of the Sabbath was most severe.

The only similarity between the Lord's Day and the Jewish Sabbath is that both recur once a week, and that both are religious festivals. To the idea of the Jewish Sabbath rest was essential, worship was an accident; to the idea of the Christian Sunday worship is essential, rest an accident. The observance of Sunday as a religious institution is a question of privilege, not of duty.

R. W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 87.

I. The first word of the Fourth Commandment reminds us that the Sabbath Day was already established among the Israelites when the law was delivered on Sinai. That law created nothing. It preserved and enforced what God had already taught His people to observe by another method than that of formal decrees.

II. In this commandment work is enjoined, just as much as rest is enjoined. Man's sin has turned work into a curse. God has redeemed and restored work into a blessing by uniting it again to the rest with which, in His Divine original order, it was associated.

III. God rests; therefore He would have man rest. God works; therefore He would have man work. Man cannot rest truly unless he remembers his relation to God, who rests.

IV. It is not wonderful that the Jews after the Captivity, as they had been schooled by a long discipline into an understanding of the meaning of the Second Commandment, so had learnt also to appreciate in some degree the worth of the Fourth. Nehemiah speaks frequently and with great emphasis of the Sabbath as a gift of God which their fathers had lightly esteemed, and which the new generation was bound most fondly to cherish. His words and acts were abused by the Jews who lived between his age and that of our Lord's nativity, and when Christ came, the Sabbath itself, all its human graciousness, all its Divine reasonableness, were becoming each day more obscured.

V. Jesus, as the Mediator, declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath, and proved Himself to be so by turning what the Jews made a curse into a blessing. He asserted the true glory of the Sabbath Day in asserting the mystery of His own relation to God and to His creatures.

F. D. Maurice, *Sermons on the Sabbath Day*, p. 1.

References: xx. 8-11.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 177; H. F. Burder, *Sermons*, p. 386; R. Lee, *Sermons*, pp. 399, 411, 421; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 87; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 50.

Chap. xx., ver. 12.—"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

I. The relationship in which we stand to our parents, a relationship based upon the fact that we owe our existence to them, that we are made in their image, that for so long a time we depend on them for the actual maintenance of life, and that,

as the necessary result of all this, we are completely under their authority during childhood—this relationship is naturally made the highest symbol of our relationship to God Himself.

II. Honouring our parents includes respect, love, and obedience as long as childhood and youth continue, and the gradual modification and transformation of these affections and duties into higher forms as manhood and womanhood draw on.

III. The promise attached to the commandment is a promise of prolonged national stability. St. Paul, slightly changing its form, makes it a promise of long life to individuals. Common experience justifies the change.

IV. There is one consideration that may induce us to obey this commandment which does not belong to the other nine: the time will come when it will be no longer possible for us to obey it.

R. W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 120.

I. Consider various ways in which a man may honour his father and mother: (1) by doing his best in the way of self-improvement; (2) by habits of care and frugality; (3) by keeping himself in soberness, temperance, and chastity.

II. Honour to parents is only the principal and most important application of a general principle. The Apostle bids us honour all men, and again, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

III. From the conception of love due to father and mother, we rise to the conception of the love due to God. When God calls Himself our Father, the clouds which conceal Him from our sight seem to break and vanish, and we feel that we can love and honour Him. Above all, we can recognise Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in Him, and through His incarnation, has adopted us into the highest condition of sonship, and made us heirs with Him of eternal life.

Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Oct. 30th, 1884.

I. The Israelite, when he came into the land which the Lord God gave him, may have found many temptations not to honour his father and mother; and unless he believed that God knew what was good for him and for all men, and was commanding the thing that was right and true, and unless he believed that God would give him strength to obey that which He commanded, he would yield continually to his evil nature.

But the words would be fulfilled to him. His days would not be long in the land which the Lord his God gave him.

II. We too have the land for our inheritance. Our fathers and mothers belonged to it, as their fathers and mothers did, and while we reverence them, every one of us may feel that his days are indeed very long in this country. Yes, for they are not bounded by our birth, or by our death either. The country had people in it who belonged to us before we came into it; it will have those belonging to us when we have gone out of it. It is the Lord God who is, and was, and is to come, who has watched over our family, and will watch over those who shall come hereafter.

III. Count this commandment which God gives thee to be thy life. So out of the earthly honour there will spring one that is eternal. The vision of the perfect Father, the joy and blessedness of being His child, will dawn upon thee more and more, and with the higher blessing there will come a greater enjoyment and appreciation of the lower.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons Preached in Country Churches*, p. 88.

REFERENCES: xx. 12.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 194; E. Irving, *Collected Writings*, vol. iii., p. 244; R. Newton, *Bible Warnings*, p. 309; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 105; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 141; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 76. xx. 12-21.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 210, 214.

Chap. xx., ver. 13.—"Thou shalt not kill."

I. THAT this commandment was intended, as some suppose, to forbid the infliction of capital punishment, is inconceivable. The Mosaic law itself inflicted death for murder, Sabbath-breaking, and the selling of a Jew into slavery. The root of the commandment lies in the greatness of human nature; man is invested with a supernatural and Divine glory; to maintain the greatness of man it may be sometimes necessary that the murderer, who in his malice forgets the mystery and wonderfulness of his intended victim, should be put to death.

II. Does the commandment absolutely forbid war between nations? Certainly not. The nation to which it was given had a strict military organisation, organised by the very authority from which the commandment came. Moses himself prayed to God that the hosts of Israel might be victorious over their enemies. Wars of ambition, wars of revenge—these are

crimes. But the moral sense of the purest and noblest of mankind has sanctioned and honoured the courage and heroism which repel by force of arms an assault on a nation's integrity, and the great principle which underlies this commandment sanctions and honours them too.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 146.

REFERENCES: xx. 13.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 123; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 154; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 87. xx. 13-16.—Parker, *The City Temple*, vol. i., p. 320, also *The Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 122; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 215.

Chap. xx., vers. 13, 14.

THERE are very sad and fearful thoughts connected with these commandments. But there are also very blessed thoughts connected with them.

I. Is it nothing to remember that the Lord God Himself watches over the life of every one of us, poor creatures as we are, that He has declared, and does declare, how precious it is in His eyes? Our life is subject to a thousand accidents. All things seem to conspire against it. Death seems to get the mastery over it at last. But no; He has said, "Death, I will be thy plague." As every plant and tree seems to die in winter and revive in spring, so He says to this more wonderful life in our bodies, "It shall go on, and this is the pledge and witness that it shall: the Head of you all, the Son of man, the only-begotten Son of God, died Himself and rose again. God's conflict with death is accomplished. The grave shall not kill."

II. And so, again, the Lord is the God over the household. He who says, "Thou shalt not kill," bids us understand that it is well to pour out blood as if it were water rather than to become base and foul creatures, beasts instead of His servants and children. That was the reason He sent the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites. They were corrupting and defiling the earth with their abominations. It was time that the earth should be cleared of them. The God who gave these commandments is King now, and there is no respect of persons with Him.

III. Christ died to take away the sins of men. He died to unite men to the righteous and sinless God. The Lord our God, who has redeemed us out of the house of bondage, will always deliver us from sin, will give us a new, right, and clean heart.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons Preached in Country Churches*, p. 98.

Chap. xx., ver. 14.—"Thou shalt not commit adultery"

As there is a Divine idea to be fulfilled in the relations between parents and children which makes that relationship sacred, so there is a Divine idea to be fulfilled in marriage, in all the offices of mutual love and service which it creates, and in all the happiness which it renders possible; and therefore marriage is sacred too. In its form the commandment only forbids acts which violate the idea on which it rests, but it requires for its true and perfect fulfilment the realization of the idea itself. The institution rests on the possibility of the absolute mutual surrender to each other of man and woman, a surrender in which nothing is reserved but loyalty to God and to those supreme moral duties which no human relationship can modify or disturb. By such a life will the true idea of marriage which underlies this commandment be fulfilled, and all peril of violating this particular precept be kept far away.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 170.

REFERENCES: xx. 14.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 139; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 167; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 216; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 100.

Chap xx., ver. 15.—"Thou shalt not steal."

I. IN this commandment the institution of property is recognised and sanctioned by the authority of God. The institution of property is necessary: (1) for increasing the produce of the earth; (2) for preserving the produce of the earth to maturity; (3) for the cultivation and development of the nature of man; (4) for the intellectual development of man.

II. The institution of property imposes upon all men the duty of industry in their callings; the duty of maintaining independence; the duty of avoiding any, even the least, invasion of the rights of others; the duty of self-restraint in expenditure, as well as of honesty in acquisition.

III. If property is a Divine institution, founded on a Divine idea, protected by Divine sanction, then in the use of it God should be remembered, and those whom God has entrusted to our pity and our care. There are a thousand good works which appeal to us for sympathy, and have a moral right to demand our aid. Definite provision should be made for discharging the duties of charity as well as for meeting the inexorable demands of justice.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 196.

REFERENCES: xx. 15.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten*

Words, p. 156; J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 224; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 179; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 216, 219; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 116.

Chap. xx., ver. 16.—**"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."**

THIS commandment is not to be restricted to false testimony given in courts of justice. It prohibits slander, calumny, misrepresentation, at any time, in any circumstances. On the other hand, we shall miss the moral significance of the commandment if we regard it as a prohibition of lying in general. It is a specific kind of falsehood which is forbidden: "false witness against our neighbour."

On what grounds does the commandment fasten on this particular kind of falsehood, instead of condemning falsehood in general? It may be suggested that the bearing of false witness against our neighbour is the most frequent and most injurious kind of falsehood, that the sin of bearing false witness in favour of others is not so common or so mischievous, and that lying to our own advantage is a sin which soon ceases to have any effect.

I. This commandment is a recognition of those tribunals which are necessary to the peace and to the very existence of the State.

II. In this commandment there is a Divine recognition of the importance of the moral judgments which men pronounce on each other: the judgment which individual men form of other men as the result of the testimony to which they have listened, whether it was true or false; the judgments which large classes of men or whole communities form of individuals, and which constitute what we call the opinion of society concerning them.

III. Many ways might be mentioned in which we may avoid bearing false witness against our neighbour. (1) We should try to form a true and just judgment of other people before we say anything against them. (2) We have no right to give our mere inferences from what we know about the conduct and principles of others as though they were facts. (3) We have no right to spread an injurious report merely because somebody brought it to us.

R. W. DALE, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 218.

REFERENCES: xx. 16.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 171; J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 239; S. Leathes, *The Foundations of Morality*, p. 191; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 127.

Chap. xx., ver. 17.—"Thou shalt not covet," etc.

I. The history of the world is stained and darkened by the crimes to which nations have been driven by the spirit of covetousness. Covetousness is forbidden not merely to prevent the miseries, and horrors, and crimes of aggressive war, but to train the spirit of nations to the recognition of God's own idea of their relations to each other. Nations should see underlying this commandment the Divine idea of the unity of the human race; they should learn to seek greatness by ministering to each other's peace, security, prosperity, and happiness.

II. Individuals, as well as nations, may violate this law. They may do it: (1) by ambition; (2) by discontent and envy; (3) by the desire to win from another man the love which is the pride and joy of his life. The very end for which Christ came was to redeem us from selfishness. The last of the Ten Commandments touches the characteristic precept of the new law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

R. W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 241.

References: xx. 17.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 189; S. Leathes, *Foundations of Morality*, p. 205; F. D. Maurice, *The Commandments*, p. 137; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 220; J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 252. xx. 18 (with xxiv. 1-18 and xxxii.).—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 198. xx. 22.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 320. xx. 22-xxiv.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 9. xx. 24.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ii., p. 89. xx. 25.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2158; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 196. xx.—G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 93. xxi. 5, 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 117. xxi. 17.—Parker, *Fountain*, Feb. 7th, 1878. xxi.-xxiii.—Parker, vol. ii., pp. 161, 168, 177.

Chap. xxii., ver. 6.—"If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution."

In the twenty-second chapter of Exodus the rights of property are defended, and the text before us may be considered as the law of fire insurance under the Mosaic dispensation. The law was a constant lesson to the people on their vast responsibility for the consequences of their conduct. God's law thus showed that Omnipotence identified itself with every just claim, and would insist on compensation for every wrong inflicted.

I. This ancient law brings into view the general doctrine of liability for the consequences of our actions and neglect. Nothing is more difficult than to raise in most men's minds a vivid sense

of the wide-spreading results of their own character and conduct. They readily acknowledge the responsibility of others, but not their own. Men never take so modest a view of their own individuality as when the object is to set forth the insignificance of their own contribution to the "evil that is in the world." But such calculations are founded on a gross delusion. The most commonplace sinner has a power of mischief in him which might sadden the blessed as they look at it.

II. The dormant sense of liability for the consequences of our conduct ought surely to be awakened by considering how we hold other men responsible in common life. Society is pervaded by the law of personal responsibility; the weight rests on every head, on every heart. It is the burden of life which every man must bear. Every man's sphere of action is much wider than he imagines. The punishment of sin always seems to a habitual transgressor disproportionate to the offence. There is not a sinner who will not be astounded when God "sets in order before him" the facts of his case.

III. The right conception of judgment to come is the bringing to the consciousness of the finite the knowledge of the Infinite in this regard. "*This hast thou done.*" He who subverts the faith or the conscience of one soul subverts in effect the faith and conscience of all souls, and "their blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

IV. These considerations should impress the mind with a new sense of the infinite bearings of our thoughts, words, and actions, and should make us "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Let to-day be the day of salvation by becoming the day of judgment, for "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be condemned with the world."

E. WHITE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 392.

REFERENCES: xxii. 6.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 239. xxii. 24.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 93. xxii. 26.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 166. xxiii. 6.—J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 77. xxiii. 9.—Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, May 10th, 1883. xxiii. 12.—S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 1st series, No. 4.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 20.—"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."

THE Angel, the way, the prepared place. It is the Divine key to the mystery of life. Life is emphatically a way. Not by

the way of the sea—a prompt and easy path—but by the way of the wilderness, of old God led His pilgrims. The vision of the Angel in the way lights up the wilderness. Consider the suggestion of the text as to—

I. The pilgrim's condition. God's children must be pilgrims, because this world is not good enough, not bright enough, not capable of being blessed enough, for the pilgrim in his home. For (1) the instructed soul sees the touch of essential imperfection and the bounds of close limitation in everything here. (2) There is a constant aching of the heart through memory and hope. (3) Life is a pilgrimage because it is far away from the Friend whom we supremely love.

II. The pilgrim's Guide. (1) God has sent His Angel *before us* in the person of His Son. (2) He sends His Angel with us in the person of the Holy Ghost.

III. The pilgrim's way to the pilgrim's home. (1) It is a way of purposed toil and difficulty, of wilderness, peril, and night. Suffer we must in the wilderness; the one question is, Shall it be with or without the Angel of the Lord? (2) It is a way of stern, uncompromising duty. God asks us now simply to do and to bear, and to wait to see the whole reason and reap the whole fruit on high. We must train ourselves to the habit of righteous action, and leave the results to God and eternity. (3) It is a way of death. God promises to none of us an immunity from death. The shadow hangs round life as a dreary monitor to all of us. He only who can eye it steadily and fix its form will see that it is angelic and lustrous with the glory beyond. The grave is but the last step of the way by which the Angel leads us to the place which He has prepared.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Congregationalist*, vol. i., p. 261.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 26.—T. T. Lynch, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 206. xxiii. 28 (with xxxiii. 2).—Parker, vol. ii., p. 192.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 30.—"By little and little I will drive them out from before thee."

IT is important, not only to see, but to love, the gradual processes of God. There is more love in doing the little thing than in doing the great thing. A great mind is never so great as when it is throwing itself into something exceedingly minute.

The special subject to which the text spiritually and allegorically refers is the conquest of sin. For such as the old inhabitants of the land of Canaan were to Israel, such the old inhabitants of our hearts are to us.

I. The sin of our natural state is the temptation of our converted state, and it is only little by little that it can be driven out.

II. The old sins are conquered little by little (1) because God has His punishments in life: He makes sin scourge sin; (2) because it is for the glory of the Holy Ghost and of His Church that these sins should be left to be gradually overcome; (3) because in our present state we could not bear to be made all at once perfectly holy.

III. Notice the expression "I will drive them out." It is one of God's high works; it requires the power of Omnipotence to eradicate sin from the human soul.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 24.

I. IT is through little things that a man destroys his soul; he fails to take note of little things, and they accumulate into great; he relaxes in little things, and thus in time loosens every bond. It is the maxim of one of our nobles, "We perish by what is lawful;" it were an equally correct aphorism, "We perish by what is little."

II. It is by little and little that men become great in piety. We become great in holiness through avoiding little faults and being exact in little duties.

III. There is great difficulty in little things. In daily dangers and duties, in the petty anxieties of common life, in the exercise of righteous principles in trifles—in these we must seek and find the opportunity of ejecting "by little and little" the foes we have sworn to expel from our hearts.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2036.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 30.—J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 237; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 154. xxiv. 3-8.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 229.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 8.—"And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

I. MOSES sprinkled the book in his hand. It was the Bible of his day, and yet it needed sprinkling. The mind of God must pass to men through the organs of the human voice, and that humanity, mingling even with the revelation of God, needs washing. Our Bibles need the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

II. He sprinkled the altar, for he had reared it. The altar was a holy thing, dedicate, consecrated, yet, for the manhood

which was associated with it, it needed the sprinkling of the blood. We have our altars of prayer, at home and in the sanctuary, and these need to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

III. Moses sprinkled the people. There is no part of man that does not need that sprinkling.

IV. The sprinkling of the blood was the token that whatever it touched became covenant. We have our covenanted Bibles and our covenanted altars; we ourselves are in covenant with Christ.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 38.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 11.—W. M. Taylor, *Limitations of Life*, p. 111. xxiv. 12.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 94. xxiv. 13.—E. Mason, *A Pastor's Legacy*, p. 166.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 18.—"And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount, and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

THE great fact that stands out in the text is that Moses spent forty days in solitary communion with God.

I. What is it to be alone with God? (1) In order to be alone with God, we must do as Moses did—we must first get up high enough. Like him, we must go to the mount. If we reach the right standing-point, the converse with God is sure and easy. (2) We must not expect to be always there. Moses went twice, Elijah went once, Peter and James and John only once. (3) Solitude with God is the very opposite of being solitary. To make it there must be two things: we must be alone with God, and God must be alone with us.

II. What are we to do when we are alone with God? (1) We must be still, hush the mind, and listen for voices. (2) We should cultivate a simple and silent prostration of heart before the majesty and beauty of Deity. (3) We may form plans on the mount, or lay out the plans we have formed already. (4) We may go near to God at such times and hold communion with Him, not familiarly, but lovingly and tenderly.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 61.

REFERENCES: xxiv.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 199. xxv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 241. xxv. 7.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 302.

Chap. xxv., ver. 8.—"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

We have to consider the Divine presence, the abiding of God with men, how it is accomplished and what it involves.

I. The dwelling of God among us in Christ Jesus, when it is a reality, and not merely an idea or a phrase, imports and of necessity secures the passing away from us of the things we have most reason to fear. When God comes to dwell among us, which can only be by dwelling in us individually, sin goes from us, in its guilt and its predominating power.

II. God comes thus to dwell with men for the development of character and for the nourishment of all goodness. The putting away of sin is but the negative part of salvation. The presence in its place of truth and duty and love and obedience—this is what makes a saved man.

III. For how long does God dwell with men? Deep philosophy as well as high faith sanctions the conclusion that the God of grace, who makes covenant with man and dwells with him, is "*our* God for ever and ever," and that He "will never leave us and never forsake us."

A. Raleigh, *Sermons Preached at the Dedication of Union Chapel, Islington*, p. 158.

Notice: I. God makes Himself dependent on the will of man—"Let them make Me." This is true, not only of material wealth, but of man's nature. God may be thwarted by man.

II. In this Divine conception of the Church there is a place for the rich. It is not impossible for rich men to be good men. God has given their offerings a place. "This is the offering which ye shall take of them: *gold*."

III. Labour has its place. There was a great deal of timber required; trees had to be cut down and brought to the spot.

IV. Woman has her rights here. We read in Exod. xxxv. 24, 25, of women that were wise-hearted, who did spin with their hands.

V. There is room for genius. *Precious stones* are required.

VI. The meanest is acceptable if it is the best that we can bring.

VII. Our best and our all is of no avail without the atonement of Christ.

T. Champness, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 32.

References: xxv. 15.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., appendix, p. 19. xxv. 21 (with Rev. xi. 19.).—Parker, *The Ark of God*, p. 1, and vol. ii., p. 205.

Chap. xxv., vers. 21, 22.—"And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee."

It was a leading and distinctive feature of Jewish worship that no image was to represent Jehovah, and yet the Jews were taught that the omnipotent God resided specially in the tabernacle, or temple, of their nation, and special rites and prohibitions guarded it, as if the great King were indeed there.

I. The Jewish Holy of Holies was empty of any image of Deity, and was entered by the high-priest alone, and by him only once a year. The centre of interest in the room was the ark of God, a chest of acacia wood, about four feet long and two feet six inches broad and deep. It contained the tables of testimony, the written agreement or covenant between God and the people of Israel.

II. That was not all. The lesson taught at Sinai was not all that the Jewish ark taught, for the ark had a lid or covering known as the "mercy-seat." Inside the ark and below was the law; above and upon the ark was that vacant space associated, through the sprinkling of blood, with the covering or forgiving of the people's transgressions; and with this seat of mercy and pardon above, rather than with the seat of law below, the presence of God was associated. The material arrangements taught the Jews great spiritual lessons: (1) that the law had been broken; (2) that mercy prevails over law; (3) that the mercy-seat needed to be sprinkled with blood.

T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 98.

Chap. xxv., ver. 22.—"There I will meet with thee."

All the time that the history of the Jews was going on, the mercy-seat and the cherubim that covered it were still witnessing to the children of Israel that God was in the midst of them. So the words, "There I will meet with thee," stood from generation to generation.

The New Testament, like the Old, is written to explain these words. The New Testament declares that He for whose appearance the Jewish worshippers longed has appeared. The New Testament tells us that in His Son God has met men and has reconciled them unto Himself. The lessons of the New Testament take up all the words and lessons of the Old Testament, all that is written about the cherubim and the mercy-seat. They say, "All this is now, not for Israelites, but for men, for men in the farthest ends of the earth." If you turn to the

last book of the Bible, you will find the Book of Genesis appearing again there, a nobler tree of life than that of the garden of Eden, which is not guarded by angels, but the fruit of which all are invited to taste. You will find the Book of Exodus again there. You will hear of the tabernacle of God being with men, and of His dwelling with them and being their God. You will find some of the latest words in the book those which have gone through the whole of it,—"Worship God." Worship means that God is meeting us and drawing us to Himself, that He has sent His Spirit into the world and established His Church in the world for the very purpose of bringing all to Him. This is the message that the Bible has brought to men in past ages; this is the message that it brings to them now.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Worship of God and Fellowship among Men*, p. 127.

I. To the Jews God set apart one special place for sacrifice, one special place for closest communion, and he who wanted some direct oracle from God must go to that spot to get his answer. The oneness continues, but it is not now oneness of spot; it is oneness of path. All the oneness of the Mosaic types goes to make the oneness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. It was upon the mercy-seat that God said, "I will meet thee and commune with thee." According to our views of Christ, according to our nearness to Christ, so will be our experience of communion with God.

III. There could be no true throne of God in the world if mercy were separated from justice. But now it is just in God to be merciful because of all the deep things that that ark tells us. The sin has been punished in Christ, and therefore God can be just and the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 46.

Chap. xxv., vers. 31-37.—"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold," etc.

I. THIS light shines because it is light, without effort, spontaneously. If the lamp is kindled, it will shine; and so this emblem has its beautiful felicity in that it points, as the highest definition of all Christian men, to the effortless, spontaneous irradiation and streaming out from themselves of the fire that lies within them. Like a light in an alabaster vase, that shines through its transparency and reveals the lovely veining of the stone, so the grace of God in a man's heart will shine through

him, turning even the opacity of his earthly nature into a medium for veiling perhaps, but also in another aspect for making visible, the light that is in him.

II. The light was derived light; and it was fed. We have a Priest who walks in His temple and trims the lamps. The condition of the light is keeping close to Christ, and it is because there is such a gap between you and Him that there is so little brightness in you. The candlestick was really a lamp fed by oil; that symbol, as Zechariah tells us, stands for the Divine influence of God's quickening Spirit.

III. The light was clustered light. The seven-branched candlestick represented the rigid, formal unity of the Jewish Church. In the New Testament we have the seven candlesticks, diverse, but made one because Jesus Christ is in the midst of them. In this slight diversity of emblem we get the whole difference between the hard external unity of the ancient Jewish polity and the free variety in unity and diversity of the Christian Church, with its individual development, as well as with its binding association.

A. MACLAREN, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 253.

REFERENCES: xxv. 40.—Phillips Brooks, *Sermons Preached in English Churches*, p. 1; A. Rowland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 140. xxv.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 125; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 303. xxv.-xxvii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 222. xxv.-xxxi.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 232; J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 105. xxvi. 6.—H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 15; H. Downton, *The Sunday Magazine*, 1877, p. 490. xxvi.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., pp. 113-115.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 2.—"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty."

THE garments peculiar to the high-priest were four: the ephod, with its "curious girdle," the breastplate, the robe of the ephod, and the mitre. (1) The garments were made of linen, typical of the human nature which Christ wears still in His glorified state. (2) They were carefully fastened together, signifying the complete unity which there is in all Christ's work for His people. (3) They were robes, not of war, but of peace, indicating that our Saviour's warfare is accomplished, and that He is now set down in the calm and quiet of His holy, peaceful functions. (4) The robe of the ephod represents the perfect robe of the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. (5) Aaron bearing the names of the people before the Lord on

his ephod is a picture of Christ bearing the names of His people in holy remembrance before God. (6) The breastplate teaches that Christ not only bears His people on His shoulders for strength, but lays them separately on His heart for love. (7) The high-priest wore a mitre with this inscription graven upon it, "Holiness to the Lord." Jesus Christ, in His very character and being, as our Representative, is standing before God, and emblazoned upon His front is His own proper title: "Holiness to the Lord." Not for Himself—He needs it not—but for us! He bears the iniquity of our holy things. For us the golden letters run "for glory and for beauty" upon the mitre of Jesus.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 299.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 1-29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 494. xxviii. 29.—J. Wells, *The Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 67 and No. 68.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 30.—"And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim," etc.

A GREAT mystery hangs over these two words, "the Urim and the Thummim," commonly translated "light and perfection," in the Septuagint version "manifestation and truth," and in the Vulgate "doctrine and truth."

I. The stones representing the Church that were borne upon the high-priest's breast and the high-priest's shoulders connect themselves with the Urim and Thummim. In some way or other God was pleased to reveal His will in connection with these twelve stones, in what way it is very difficult to determine. There are these possible interpretations: (1) It may be that it pleased God at certain times to throw a miraculous light upon these twelve different coloured stones, which did in some way write His mind; either by the initiatory letters, or by some signs which were familiar to the high-priest, He conveyed His will to the high-priest, that he in turn might convey it to the people. (2) It has been supposed that the stones were not made themselves the channels or media by which God conveyed His will, but that they accredited and, as it were, empowered the high-priest when he was before God, so that God, seeing him in the fulness of his priesthood, was pleased to convey His will to his mind.

II. Consider what we have that answers to Urim and Thummim, and how we should consult God and obtain our answers. (1) In prayer we should pray consultingly, in reading read consultingly. (2) In consulting God we must

honestly make up our minds to follow God's guidance. (3) If we are to attain Urim and Thummim in our consultations with God, we must do it through priesthood—in the recognition of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. There are many ways in which God may give us the Urim and Thummim to direct our steps: (1) by a light breaking on some passage of the Bible; (2) by the Spirit of God illuminating our own minds.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 54.

REFERENCE: xxviii. 30.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 167.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 36.—"And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to the Lord."

THIS plate of pure gold was fastened by blue lace to the mitre, or turban, or tiara, or linen which was upon the head of the high-priest. With the plate of pure gold upon his forehead, he went in before God to present the inscription graven there like the engraving of a signet, "Holiness to the Lord," to take away the iniquity of the holy things of Israel and to make those holy things, purged from their iniquity, acceptable to God. Consider the subject of holiness.

I. The word is used in three senses in the Bible. (1) Sometimes the word "holy" means that which is set apart, consecrated. In that sense the vessels of the Temple were holy. (2) Sometimes the word signifies the indwelling of the Spirit, with His gradually sanctifying processes. In this sense the Church is holy. (3) There is a still higher sense in which man is perfectly holy. Christ perfects them that are sanctified.

II. The true definition of holiness is the likeness of God. But we cannot conceive of the likeness of God but through a medium, and that medium must be the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever traits we find characterising the life of Jesus, these make up holiness. (1) The life of Christ was a separate life. (2) He always carried about an inner sanctuary in His own soul. (3) The life of Christ had a subdued tone. (4) It was a life consecrated to an object. (5) It was a life of praise.

III. Look upon holiness as an end to be obtained. Do not seek holiness as a means to happiness, but happiness as a means to holiness. Be more careful about the holiness of little things than of great things.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 68.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 38.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 8 xxviii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 229. xxviii., xxix.—*Homiletic Quarterly*

vol. iv., pp. 409, 410. xxix. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1203. xxix. 12.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 237.

Chap. xxix., vers. 26-28 (with Num. xv. 18-21, xviii. 25-32).—"Thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved and which is heaved up."

The human race has for ever outgrown the Jewish religion; it was a most oppressive yoke. Its laborious ritual never was of any value beyond that of *representing* personal conditions. (1) As illustrating the state of the heart in those who truly offer themselves up to God, there is something impressive and beautiful in the ancient wave-offerings and heave-offerings. Waving is one of nature's universal laws. The whole creation, with its myriads of planets, suns, and heavens, lives because it waves to and fro the central life. The life of God waves to and fro between our spirits and Him. (2) In prayer our souls are heaved up towards the eternal Soul of our souls. The heaving and expansion of the soul and body before God are really the heaving of His life and love within the soul. Nothing heaves up the soul like a perfect love. Our daily heave-offering is a labour that has a great reward. Our aspirations, our inner heavings and upliftings, are the works which will follow us into the eternal world. They will follow us by being actually constituent elements of our future body. (3) Some persons think it strange that we should be exhorted to hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. But all who have a thrilling expectation of it may be sure that the vital element of the new coming is waving in upon them, and that as they heave up their souls and expand with desire to draw down the heavenly fire they are unconsciously hastening the coming of the day of God.

J. Pulsford, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 241.

References: xxix. 38, 39.—R. Eden, *Sermons for Sundays: Festivals and Fasts*, 1st series, p. 470. xxix. 43.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 321; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 34. xxix., xxx.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 244.

Chap. xxx., vers. 6-10.—"And thou shalt put it [the altar of incense] before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony," etc.

The altar of incense was made of acacia wood, and stood about a yard high and eighteen inches square. Incense was burnt upon it every morning and evening, and it was used for this purpose only. The altar and incense were symbolic—

I. Of the prayers of God's people. (1) In prayer we speak

to God and tell Him the thoughts of our minds, the feelings of our hearts, the desires of our spirits. The incense smoke ascended, arrow-like, in a straight and most direct column to heaven. Our prayers ascend immediately and in the directest way to the heart and ear of God. (2) In prayer we stand very near God. The altar of incense was placed "before the mercy-seat." (3) The pleasant odour of the incense is symbolic of the acceptableness of prayer.

II. Of intelligent, unceasing, and reverent prayer. (1) The burning of incense is intelligent prayer. It took place in the light, and our prayers should be presented to God intelligently. (2) Unceasing prayer. It was a *perpetual* incense before the Lord. (3) Reverent prayer. "Ye shall burn no strange incense thereon; it is most holy unto the Lord."

III. Of prayer offered in Christ's name. Aaron sprinkled the golden horns with the blood of atonement. This act is typical of the offering of prayer in the name of Christ.

IV. Of the power of prayer. The horns of the altar symbolise power. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth *much*."

D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 387.

Reference: xxx. 7, 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1710.

Chap. xxx., ver. 8.—"And . . . Aaron . . . shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations."

This altar of incense had a very distinct meaning, and there are large lessons to be drawn from it.

I. The incense is a lovely, significant, and instructive symbol of prayer. (1) It teaches that prayer is the ascent of a man's soul to God. (2) That the prayer which ascends must be the prayer that comes from a fire. (3) The kindled incense gave forth fragrant odours. When we present our poor prayers, they rise up acceptable to God in curling wreaths of fragrance that He delights in and that He accepts.

II. Notice the position of the altar of incense in relation to the rest of the sanctuary. It stood in the holy place, midway between the outer court, where the whole assembly of worshippers were in the habit of meeting, and the holiest of all, where the high-priest alone went once a year. Whoever approached the altar of incense had to pass by the altar of sacrifice, and whoever was on his way to the holiest of all had to pass by the altar of incense. These things teach us these plain lessons: (1) That all prayer must be preceded by the perfect sacrifice, and that our

prayers must be offered on the footing of the perfect sacrifice which Christ Himself has offered. (2) That there is no true fellowship and communion of spirit with God except on condition of habitual prayer, and they that are strangers to the one are strangers to the other.

III. The offering was perpetual. Morning and evening the incense was piled up and blown into a flame, and all the day and night it smouldered quietly on the altar; that is to say, special seasons and continual devotion, morning and evening kindled, heaped up, and all the day and night glowing.

IV. Once a year Aaron had to offer a sacrifice of expiation for this altar that bore the perpetual incense. Even our prayers are full of imperfections and sins, which need cleansing and forgiveness by the great High-priest.

A. MACLAREN, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 234.

REFERENCE: xxx. 11-16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1581.

Chap. xxx., ver. 12.—"When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them."

THE word which is here rendered "ransom" is afterwards rendered "atonement." The atonement covered or removed what displeased God, and thus sanctified for His service. Our notion of atonement under the law should ordinarily be limited to the removal of the temporal consequences of moral or ceremonial defilement.

The sum of half a shekel was the tax that every man had to pay as his ransom, and as this is the single instance in the Jewish law in which an offering of money is commanded, it seems highly probable that it was not a ransom for the soul so much as a ransom for the life which the Israelite made when he paid his half-shekel. On all occasions in which the soul, the immortal principle, is undeniably concerned, the appointed offerings are strictly sacrificial.

Consider: I. The ransom for the life. Our human lives are forfeited to God; we have not accomplished the great end of our being, and therefore we deserve every moment to die. The Israelites paid their tax as a confession that life had bene forfeited, and as an acknowledgment that its continuance depended wholly on God. We cannot give the half-shekel payment, but we should have before us the practical remembrance that in God's hand is the soul of every living thing.

II. The rich and the poor were to pay just the same sum. This was a clear and unqualified declaration that in the sight of God the distinctions of rank and estate are altogether as nothing; that, whilst He gathers the whole human race under His guardianship, there is no difference in the watchfulness which extends itself to the several individuals.

III. If we understand the word "soul" in the ordinary sense, the text is a clear indication that God values at the same rate the souls of all human beings. Every soul has been redeemed at the price of the blood of God's Son; the Mediator died that the soul might live; and if rich and poor acknowledge by a tribute that from God is the life of the soul, it is right that they should acknowledge it by the same tribute. Rich and poor must offer the same atonement for the soul.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2566.

REFERENCES: xxx. 19.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 321. xxx. 22-38.—B. Isaac, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 395. xxxi. 1-6.—J. Spencer Bartlett, *Sermons*, p. 284. xxxi. 1-11.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 251. xxxi. 6.—J. H. Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 368.

Chap. xxxi., vers. 12, 13.—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep," etc.

FROM the moment in which He created man, God required that one day in seven should be consecrated to Himself; and however this requisition may have formed the basis for much that is peculiar in the Jewish economy, the requisition itself must belong to all ages.

I. The Fourth Commandment differs from every other in the Decalogue in that it is not the authoritative publication of a law which might have been ascertained by natural religion. It is a sign, high, clear, and beautiful as the rainbow, that God is not unmindful of this earth, and has made known to it His will, and watches over its history.

II. The keeping of a Sabbath was a sign or symbol by which the Israelites might know what God they worshipped, even a God that could sanctify His worshippers.

III. The commandment decides the proportion of time that we are to devote to God. After every six days of labour there is to be a solemn rest.

IV. By keeping the Sabbath the Israelites acknowledged Jehovah as Creator, and commemorated their deliverance from

Egypt. We do the same in keeping the Christian Sabbath. As amongst the Jews the Sabbath was made to fall on the day of their deliverance from Pharaoh, so amongst the Christians it should fall on the day when their redemption was completed. With the Jews the Sabbath was a sign that their God had vanquished the Egyptians, divided the Red Sea, and led the nation to Canaan; with us it is a sign that our God hath defeated Satan, cleft the waters of death, and opened a way to the heavenly Canaan.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2461.

REFERENCES: xxxi. 16, 17.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 3rd series, p. 366. xxxi. 18.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 258.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 1.—"The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us."

NOTICE: I. The very essence of idolatry is not spiritual ignorance and obtuseness, but a wilful turning away from the spiritual knowledge and worship of God. (1) This act of idolatry was in the very front of the majesty and splendour of Jehovah revealed on Sinai. It was in the very face of the mount that might not be touched and that burned with fire, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, by which the Lord God of hosts was declaring Himself to the people there. The people saw the glory of God, and while the vision was there, and all its impressions fresh on their hearts, they made themselves a molten calf, and sang, "These, O Israel, be thy gods." (2) With the idol before him, the priest proclaimed a feast unto the Lord; and the people pleased themselves with the thought that they were "fearing the Lord, while they served their own gods." The real heart of idolatry is here laid bare. It is, in plain terms, an effort to bring God within reach, to escape the trouble, pain, and weariness of spiritual effort, and substitute the effort of the eye, hand and tongue for the labour of the soul. (3) In God's sight, that is, in reality, this is a turning away from Him. They meant this bull to be an image of God their Leader. God saw that it was an image of their own idolatrous and sensual hearts.

II. The contrast between the prophet and the priest. Priests have in all ages been the willing ministers of idolatry; as an order they have rarely lifted up their voice against it unless inspired by the prophets of truth. The prophet becomes the censor of the priesthood; while the priesthood marks the

prophet as a man to be silenced and, if possible, put down. The perfect Mediator is both Priest and Prophet. He reveals God to man in conducting man to God. The Christian priesthood partakes of this double character.

III. The central principle of idolatry is the shrinking of the spirit from the invisible God. It is the glory of the Incarnation that it presents that image of the invisible God which is not an idol, that it gives into the arms of the yearning spirit a Man, a Brother, and declares that Jesus Christ is the God of heaven.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 178.

References: xxxii. 1.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 28. xxxii. 7.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 12.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 24.—"So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

I. There never was a speech more true to one disposition of our human nature than this of Aaron. We are all ready to lay the blame on the furnaces. "The fire did it," we are all of us ready enough to say. "In better times we might have been better, broader men, but now, behold, God put us into the fire, and we came out thus."

Our age, our society, is what, with this figure taken out of the old story of Exodus, we have been calling it. It is the furnace. Its fire can set, and fix, and fasten what the man puts into it. But, properly speaking, it can create no character. It can make no truly faithful soul a doubter. It never did. It never can.

II. The subtlety and attractiveness of this excuse extends not only to the results which we see coming forth in ourselves; it covers also the fortunes of those for whom we are responsible. Everywhere there is this cowardly casting off of responsibilities upon the dead circumstances around us. It is a very hard treatment of the poor, dumb, helpless world which cannot answer to defend itself. It takes us as we give ourselves to it. It is our minister, fulfilling our commissions for us upon our own souls.

III. There is delusion and self-deception in this excuse. Very rarely indeed does a man excuse himself to other men and yet remain absolutely unexcused in his own eyes. Often the very way to help ourselves most to a result which we have set before ourselves is just to put ourselves into a current which is sweeping on that way, and then lie still, and let the current do the rest, and in all such cases it is so easy to ignore or to forget the first step, and so to say that it is only the drift of the

current which is to blame for the dreary shore on which at last our lives are cast up by the stream.

IV. If the world is thus full of the Aaron spirit, where are we to find its cure? Its source is a vague and defective sense of personality. I cannot look for its cure anywhere short of that great assertion of the human personality which is made when a man personally enters into the power of Jesus Christ.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Sermons Preached in English Churches*, p. 43.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 24.—S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 244; S. Cox, *The Genesis of Evil*, p. 212. xxxii. 26.—Spurgeon, vol. xxvi., No. 1531, and *My Sermon Notes*, p. 36; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, pp. 121, 282. xxxii. 29.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 254. xxxii.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 223, 225.

Chap. xxxii., vers. 31, 32.—"And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold," etc.

I. THERE are three reasons why intercession is a very high duty. (1) It is a power given to every man to wield, a mighty instrument for which we are responsible. (2) It is love's utterance in its holiest expression. (3) You are never walking so accurately in the likeness of Jesus Christ as when you are praying for a fellow-creature. On these three pillars the duty of intercession rests.

II. There are great privileges connected with intercession. (1) It is a beautiful way of giving expression to love. (2) It revives the spirit of prayer in ourselves.

III. Intercessory prayer must be: (1) intensely earnest; (2) accompanied with thanksgiving; (3) we should have a regular, defined period for it.

Intercession is the climax of prayer, because it was the climax of Christ's prayers.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 78.

THE nobler meekness is that which comes forth victorious from the struggle with strong emotion, and wins a glory from the passion it has subdued. The indication of an impetuous, fiery spirit in Moses only reveals the beauty of the meek patience which marked his life.

I. In the story of the golden calf we see (1) man's natural tendency to worship; (2) we see the Israelites employing the very tokens of their deliverance to build a god for themselves. The very gifts of Heaven—wealth, intellect, power—men turn

into idols. (3) In worshipping a golden calf the Israelites utterly degraded themselves.

II. The godliness of Moses manifested itself in self-sacrificing sympathy. Fronting death and its mystery, he stood sublimely willing even to be cut off from God if the sin of the people might thereby be forgiven. (1) His revulsion from their sin mingled with his own love for the people. The holiest men ever feel most deeply the sin of their fellows—they see its seeds in themselves; they find its shadow falling across their heaven. (2) He felt the promise of his people's future. In them lay the germ of the world's history; through them might be unfolded the glory of Jehovah before the face of all nations. Gathering these feelings together, we understand his prayers.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 106.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 30-35.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 273. xxxii. 31.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, 3rd series, p. 148. xxxii. 31, 32.—H. Grey, *A Parting Memorial*, pp. 135, 155. xxxii. 32.—C. J. Vaughan, *The Liturgy and Worship of the Church of England*, p. 167. xxxii.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 265. xxxii.-xxxiv.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 214. xxxii.-xxxix.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 119. xxxiii. 2.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 280. xxxiii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 359. xxxiii. 8.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 140. xxxiii. 9-23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 338. xxxiii. 12.—J. Baldwin Brown, *The Divine Life in Man*, p. 266.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 14.—"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

THIS is a word in season to every one who is weary. It is as surely ours as if, like the message of the shepherds at Bethlehem, it came to us, with stroke of light and rush of mystic music, straight from the eternal throne.

I. In what sense has God said, "My presence shall go with thee"? He is present to the believer as a Friend whose love has been accepted, and whose conversation is understood with all the intelligence of a kindred nature.

II. In what sense does the presence of God give rest? (1) It tends to give rest from the terror incident to a state of condemnation. (2) It gives rest from the anguish which springs from a discordant nature. (3) It gives rest from the cravings of an unsatisfied spirit. (4) It gives rest from the distraction felt amidst uncongenial scenes and associations. (5) It gives rest from the disquietude which results from want of human sympathy. (6) It gives rest from apprehensions regarding the

future. (7) The presence of God with us now is the pledge of perfect rest in the next life.

C. STANFORD, *Central Truths*, p. 227.

I. THE Angel's presence refers to Christ, the same who is elsewhere called the "Angel of the covenant."

II. The presence of God in Christ showed itself in the desert by the pillar and cloud in which it tabernacled, and also by the shechinah, which, as it hung over the sacred tent, testified to God's faithfulness and glory.

III. Note the imperatives of God's futures. No uncertainty shall harbour here; it comes in the infallibility of a prophecy and the sovereignty of a fiat: "My presence shall go with thee." It is personal, intimate, minute, appropriate.

IV. The presence of God brings rest. There is (1) a rest by God, when a justified soul rests through the blood of Jesus from the torment of its fear; (2) a rest on God, when the sanctified spirit reposes on the bosom of the promises; and (3) a rest with God, when the battle of life is over, and the victor-saint lays down his armour.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 249.

REFERENCES: xxxiii. 14.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 64; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 467; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1583. xxxiii. 15.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 467.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 18.—"Show me Thy glory."

IT was a fine aspiration, worthy of the man who uttered it and the occasion on which he spoke. It was the reaching out of a darker dispensation after Gospel light, the reflections wishing to lose themselves in the great original. It was earth longing after heaven—the restlessness of earth longing for that which should be Divine, the rest of desire.

I. There are three kinds of glory: (1) the glory of circumstances; (2) moral glory; (3) the glory of the sense or consciousness that everything goes back to the Creator, encircling Him with His own proper perfections, the living of God in the adoration, gratitude, and service of His creatures. Moses saw all three. His prayer had an answer on the Mount of Transfiguration.

II. It was a very remarkable answer that God made to him. "I will make My kindness pass before thee." Kindness is glory. The glory of God was in Jesus Christ. That was the manifestation of the glory of God—that is, kindness. God is love. He has many attributes, but they meet to make love.

All God's attributes unite together, and His glory is His goodness.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 91.

Chap. xxxiii., vers. 18-20.

I. CONSIDER what Moses desired when he prayed, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." It could not have been a mere external display of glory and power. He had seen enough, and more than enough, of these to satisfy the most enlarged desire. It could not have been to behold the glory of God as manifested in His past government of the world. In this he had been already taught. He had been the world's sole historian for nearly two thousand years. It is probable that in this prayer, "Show me Thy glory," he desired to comprehend the merciful purpose of God towards the Israelites, and through them to the world. He wished to understand more fully the whole plan of salvation, and to see the things that should happen in the latter days.

II. Consider how far this desire was satisfied. God made His goodness to pass before Him. (1) This was probably a prophetic view of His mercy to the Israelites as a nation. (2) God showed him His administration as a Sovereign. (3) He gave him a prophetic view of the mission of Christ. "Thou shalt see My back parts" might be translated "Thou shalt see Me as manifested in the latter days."

III. Why was not the petition of Moses fully granted? The reason why man could not behold God's glory would not be because of its terror or majesty, but because the view of the riches of His grace, His compassion, and benevolence, would excite emotions of reverence, admiration, and love too terrible for humanity to bear.

BISHOP SIMPSON, *Sermons*, p. 347.

REFERENCES: xxxiii. 18.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 234; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 64; J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 252; Parker, *Fountain*, May 30th, 1878. xxxiii. 18, 19.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 264; H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 107; J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 50. xxxiii. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 553. xxxiii. 20-23.—A. L. Mansel, *Bampton Lecture*, 1858, p. 67.

Chap. xxxiv., vers. 5-8, 29-35.

THIS was the transfiguration of Moses. Let us consider the narrative as a spiritual parable, and try to read in it some of the conditions and privileges of exalted communion with God.

Communion with God is the highest prerogative of spiritual

beings. It is the instinctive craving of human souls; it is the supreme privilege and joy of the religious life; it is the inspiration and strength of all great service. God redeems us and saves us by drawing us to Himself. By mysterious voices He solicits us; by irrepressible instincts He impels us; by subtle affinities He holds us; by ineffable satisfactions He makes us feel His nearness and fills us with rest and joy.

Notice: I. We are admitted to fellowship with God only through propitiatory sacrifice. Moses builds an altar under the hill, offers sacrifices upon it, and sprinkles the blood thereof before he ascends the holy mount to commune with God. We must seek fellowship with God through the one propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Not only is the sacrifice of Christ the medium through which the forgiving love of God becomes possible; it is the supreme expression of it.

II. We are qualified for our highest intercourse with God by the spiritual grace of our own souls; Moses was qualified for this revelation of the supreme glory of God by his peculiar magnanimity and self-sacrifice. When God admits us to intercourse with Himself, what we see will depend upon our capability of seeing. Only the pure in heart can see God.

III. We are admitted to visions of the higher glory of God only when we seek them for the uses of practical religious duty. If selfishness be a disqualification, so is mere sentiment. A man who seeks God for his own religious gratification merely may see God, but he will not see God's supreme glory. Our chief reason for desiring to know God must be that we may glorify Him in serving others.

IV. The most spiritual visions of God, the closest communion with God, are to be realised only when we seek Him alone. In our greatest emotions we seek solitude instinctively. Human presence is intolerable to the intensest moods of the soul. No man can be eminent either in holiness or service who does not often ascend to the mountain-top, that he may be alone with God and behold His glory.

V. The supreme revelation of God to which we attain through such fellowship with Him is the revelation of His grace and love. When a man sees this, the glory of God has passed before him.

VI. The revelation of God's glorious goodness transfigures the man who beholds it.

H. ALLON, *The Vision of God*, p. 41.

Chap. xxxiv., vers. 6, 7.—"The name of the Lord."

THERE were thirteen names, or thirteen attributes, which went

to make the names, as God showed Himself on Sinai, of which thirteen nine were mercy, two were power, two were justice. (1) The Lord. There we lay our basis. Unless we are prepared to admit the sovereignty of God, we can go no further, we shall see no more. (2) The Lord God. There we put the two names in combination. The word God in its root means kindness. We put the infinitude of His sovereignty in combination with the boundlessness of His affection, and we say, "The Lord, the Lord God." (3) We come next to the goings forth of that wonderful mystery of Godhead to man in mercy. The strict meaning of the word "mercy" is, a heart for misery. The first thought here is the Lord God stooping down to the wretched, going forth to the miserable. (4) And why merciful? Because gracious. Grace is the free flowing of undeserved favour. In two things especially God shows His grace: in the pardon of sin and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (5) "Long-suffering." We now come to a wonderful part of the character of God—patience. The end of this world is stayed because "the longsuffering of God leadeth men to repentance." This is the most marvellous part of the character of God—His patience; it contrasts so strongly with the impetuosity, the haste, the impulsiveness, of man. (6) "Abundant in goodness and truth." Abundant is enough and something over, cup so full that it mantles. He is abundant in (7) goodness and (8) truth. (9) "Keeping mercy for thousands." There are many people who do not see their mercy, for whom God is now keeping it in reserve. He is holding it till His own appointed time, till His own season comes. (10) "Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." This brings us more and more into the work of Christ. All God's attributes met that He might pardon sin. (11) "By no means clear the guilty." The word "guilty" is not in the original; it is simply "by no means clear." He will not clear any one whom He has not pardoned. God's mercy is infinite in its own bounds, but it keeps within these bounds most strictly. (12) "He visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children," etc. This is an ever-standing, visible proof and monument of God's holiness and justice. He visits sin from generation to generation. There are inherited dispensations, inherited calamities, inherited evils.

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 97.

REFERENCES: xxxiv. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 217. xxxiv. 6, 7.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 325; Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 173. xxxiv. 14.—

Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 502; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 169. xxxiv. 20.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 291; W. M. Taylor, *Limitations of Life*, p. 219. xxxiv. 27, 28.—R. Lee, *Sermons*, p. 388. xxxiv. 28, 29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 116.

Chap. xxxiv., ver. 29.—"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him."

"He wist not that the skin of his face shone." Few and simple as these words are, there could be none grander written to the memory of a hero. The noblest and loftiest character is assuredly that of the man who is so absorbed in the Divine nature of his calling, and so conscious of the need of those for whom he labours, that he becomes forgetful of the beauty in his character which others recognise, and almost unconscious that he is himself the worker.

I. There are many unconscious believers and workers in the world still, who may gather helpful thoughts from this fact concerning Moses. Much time and ability has been devoted to discussing the question of "Christian assurance." To say that if we do not *feel* that we are saved, we *are* not saved, is to lose sight of what salvation really means. It is nowhere stated in Scripture that an assurance of that salvation which is a gradual matter, a day-by-day struggle and deliverance, is either universal or necessary. God may think it best that some of us should not have assurance, as on that great day He kept Moses unconscious that the skin of his face shone.

II. Perhaps some of us may feel that there were moments of such bright and hopeful experience once, but they are past now, and that seems to us the saddest thought of all. Still we need not despair. We should go back as Moses did to the mount where God had spoken to him, to the source of the old enthusiasm and the former faith. If we go back and stand face to face with the crucified Christ, our life will glow anew with the radiance of His love, even though we ourselves are unconscious of it.

III. This holds good also regarding our work for God. Many a splendid silent work is done on earth, and the doer is perhaps unconscious of it, and may remain unconscious till the great day of the Lord shall reveal it.

T. Teignmouth Shore, *The Life of the World to Come*, p. 159.

Reference: xxxiv. 29-35.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 115.

Chap. xxxiv., ver. 30 (with Acts vi. 15).—"And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."

In reading the account of Stephen's death and of the supernatural light that flushed over his face, one is led to think of a similar scene in the life of Moses, and to put the two together for the sake of comparison. The more attentively we study the two incidents, the more we shall find that they have much in common, as both men belong to the same Divine mould, and yet much in contrast, as they belong to ages and dispensations wide apart.

I. We may compare that view of God which is reflected on the face of each of them. The vision that Moses saw was what is termed (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 22) "God's glory." It revealed the purity of God, but had no distinct features; it promised mercy, but the way of pardon was not made plain. The object presented to the eye of Stephen was "Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God." The purity which in the day of Moses had no distinct features has formed itself into the countenance of the Son of God, and the mysterious mercy descends from God's throne by a new and living way, in the person of the Mediator.

II. We may compare the effect of the view on the immediate witnesses. In the case of Moses the effect was mainly an external brightness; the beauty of his face had something of terror with it. The beauty of Stephen's face consisted more in Divine expression than in supernatural brightness. Its appearance did not outdazzle or overawe the beholders. The one transfiguration was bright, but formless, the shadow of the shechinah on him who sees it; the other was the beauty of the soul that has beheld Christ.

III. We may compare the crisis of life in which each of these transfigurations occurred. Moses was in the fulness of his power and success as a Divine messenger; Stephen was placed as a criminal before those who sat in Moses' seat, and was charged with breaking in pieces the law which Moses gave.

IV. We may compare the effects on the surrounding spectators. In the case of Moses the impression made soon passed away; in the case of Stephen the ashes of the martyr became the seed of the Church.

V. We may compare the permanence of the transfigurations in the subjects of them. The brightness on the face of Moses faded away as he receded from the great vision. Moses was descending the hill of God with a brightness which was con-

tinually dying. Stephen was ascending the higher mount with a glory growing to all eternity.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 170.

Chap. xxxiv., ver. 33.—"And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face."

IT is a law of our being and the being of all material things that everything grows like to that with which it is conversant and familiar. Those who frequent the good gather the image of their goodness, and those who deal much with God grow Godlike.

I. What was the glory on Moses' face? St. Paul gives us a remarkable answer to this question. He says, "They could not look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished." "That which is abolished" is the law, and the end of the law is Christ; therefore the glory upon Moses' face was the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. It was not in compassion for the weakness of the Israelites that Moses put a veil upon his face. The Jews had lost the power to see the end of that which is abolished, to see the glory of God in Jesus Christ reflected in the law. The veil was judicial, the consequence of sin; it was interposed between them and the beauty of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

III. There are veiled hearts among us now, and the reason of the veil is sin. The remedy is Christ. "When they shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." When we have Christ within, we shall be able to look with unveiled mind upon all the beauties and glories of the Christ without. And then will come to pass that with which St. Paul sums it all up: "We, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

J. VAUGHAN, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 109.

REFERENCES: xxxv. 8.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 336. xxxv. 20-29.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 293. xxxv. 29.—J. Vaughan, *Meditations in Exodus*, p. 118; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 300. xxxv. 30-34.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 165. xxxv. 30-35.—L. D. Bevan, *Sermons to Students*, p. 121. xxxv. 40.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 303. xxxv., xxxvi.—*Ibid.*, p. 303. xxxvi. 1.—W. Arnot, *Good Words*, 1862, p. 318. xxxvii. 7.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 103. xxxvii. 23.—*Ibid.*, p. 145. xxxviii. 8.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 301; H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 169; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. i., p. 189. xxxviii. 23.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 321. xxxviii. 26, 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1581.

Chap. xxxix., ver. 8.—"And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen."

A FULL description of the breastplate is given twice over in the Book of Exodus, and from it we may gather certain useful lessons as to the Church in all ages.

I. There were twelve stones in the breastplate, each of them different, and each bearing a different name. This shows what variety there is among believers. So long as the human race differs so much in mental structure, we shall not be able to think alike, even in those things that are spoken of in Holy Writ. There are differences with regard to worship, differences in religious feelings and experiences; the stones are not alike, yet they are all on the same breastplate.

II. This brings us to another truth—the unity of the Church, all differing, yet all on the heart of Christ. The enemy has only to show himself, and men who differ amongst themselves agree to drive him back.

III. They were all precious stones; not one was mean or contemptible. God's Church has ever been *costly*. No jewel is what it afterwards becomes when first found. Let not the stone which sparkles in its setting sneer at that which only looks like a pebble. The Master has chosen it; He knows that He has put within its rude exterior that which only needs time and skill to make it "shine as the stars for ever and ever."

IV. Why were those precious stones put upon the breastplate? They were not on the mitre; they were upon the heart, teaching us that the Church is beloved. Every believer is on the heart of God.

V. Great pains were taken to keep the breastplate from being lost. It was not only fastened to the shoulders by chains, but the bottom part of the breastplate was fastened by two rings lashed to the two rings in the ephod. This tells us of the Church's security.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 234.

Chap. xxxix., vers. 9, 10, 14.—"They made the breastplate, and they set it in four rows of stones," etc.

THE breastplate of the Jewish high-priest is a beautiful type of intercession. When the high-priest appeared before God in his full sacerdotal attire, there would be the twelve names upon his heart, indicative of his love and care for the whole people of Israel. The names upon the breastplate betoken

the individuality of Christ's intercession for His people. Every Christian ought to intercede, because he is in a certain important sense a priest, and intercession is one of the priestly functions.

I. Observe, first, the great importance attached to this duty in Scripture. In the Old Testament we find Abraham interceding for Sodom; in the New Testament we find the early Church winning the life of St. Peter by intercessory prayer. The Lord's Prayer is so constructed that it is impossible to use it without praying for all other Christians besides ourselves.

II. The duty of intercessory prayer is based upon the fact that men are one body and members one of another. Whether in nature or in grace, a man is essentially the member of a family. And if this be so, the weal and woe of other men, of other Christians, must be, to a certain extent, our weal and woe, cannot ultimately fail to reach us. We must bring our relations and sympathies with us when we appear before God.

III. Although both the duty of intercessory prayer and the grounds of it are clear, there is no part of devotion which Christians so much neglect. Some shrink from intercessory prayer under a feeling that, coming from them, it would be presumptuous. The real reason, however, of our reluctance to practise intercessory prayer, is a want of sympathy with others, a want of love. He who prays with the largest sympathy, he who embraces in his prayer the widest circle of his fellow-creatures, is most in sympathy with the mind of God when he prays, has the key of God's heart, and therefore of God's treasury.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 79.

REFERENCE: xl.-Lev. i. 1.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 133.

LEVITICUS.

Chap. i., vers. 1-6.

I. THE very same voice which proclaimed the commandments on Sinai is here said to announce the nature of the sacrifices, and how, when, and by whom they are to be presented. The unseen King and Lawgiver is here, as everywhere, making known His will. Those sacrifices which it was supposed were to bend and determine His will themselves proceeded from it.

II. These words were spoken to the children of Israel *out of the tabernacle.* The tabernacle was the witness of God's abiding presence with His people, the pledge that they were to trust Him, and that He sought intercourse with them.

III. The tabernacle is represented as the tabernacle of the *congregation.* There, where God dwells, is the proper home of the whole people; there they may know that they are *one.*

IV. "Say to the children of Israel, If any of you bring an offering to the Lord." The desire for such sacrifice is presumed. Everything in the position of the Jew is awakening in him the sense of gratitude, of obligation, of dependence. He is to take of the herd and the flock for his offering. The lesson is a double one. The common things, the most ordinary part of his possessions, are those which he is to bring; that is one part of his teaching. The animals are subjects of man; he is to rule them and make use of them for his own higher objects; that is another.

V. The victim was taken to the door of the place at which all Israelites had an equal right to appear; but the man who brought it laid his own hand upon the head of it. He signified that the act was his, that it expressed thoughts in his mind which no one else could know of.

VI. The reconciliation which he seeks he shall find. God will meet him there. God accepts this sign of his submission. He restores him to his rights in the Divine society.

VII. Now it is that we first hear of the priests, Aaron's sons. If there was to be a congregation, if the individual Israelites were not to have their separate sacrifices and their separate

gods, then there must be a representative of this unity. The priest was consecrated as a witness to the people of the actual relation which existed between them and God.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures*, p. 67.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 126. i. 1-9.—*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 21, 29. i. 4.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 104. i. 4, 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1771. i. 5.—*Ibid.*, No. 1772; Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, Jan. 22nd, 1885. i. 9.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 46. i.-vii.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 171; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., pp. 309, 311. ii. 1, 2.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 96. ii. 12-16.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 35. iii.—*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 126. iv.—*Ibid.*, p. 53. iv. 2, 3.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 107. iv. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 739; Parker, vol. iii., p. 46. iv. 6, 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1780. iv. 27-31.—*Ibid.*, vol. xviii., No. 1048. iv. 29.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 39. v.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 59. v. 15.—*Ibid.*, p. 127. v. 17, 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1386. vi. 1-7.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 67. vi. 2, 5.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 114. vi. 9.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 128. vi. 12.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 20. vi. 13.—W. Spensley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 344; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 197; Parker, vol. iii., p. 74; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 120. vii. 1.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 128. vii. 11-18.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 313. vii. 27.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 130. vii. 29-31.—J. Fleming, *Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 74. vii. 37, 38.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 529. vii.—Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, May 22nd, 1879.

Chap. viii., vers. 1, 2.

I. THE priesthood of the sons of Aaron belongs only to the past. In its place there is the one great High-priest of mankind, pleading for all and sacrificing for all, Himself the Sacrifice, holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners, entering within the veil, ever living to make intercession for us. In its place also there is the universal priesthood. What Israel refused to be, what kings and prophets desired to see and saw not, has been fulfilled in the Church of Christ. We are a kingdom of priests. Each of us may offer the living sacrifice of body, soul, and spirit, and the incense of prayer and adoration.

II. Yet not the less does that first ordination in the Church of the wilderness remain the type and pattern of all subsequent ordinations. Ordination is nothing less than the solemn dedication of men to be servants of the Most High, ministers of the Church of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God, not priests

themselves, as the sons of Aaron were priests, with the old functions and the old prerogatives, but appointed witnesses of the priesthood of Christ, appointed witnesses also of the universal priesthood, called to be living representatives of all that belongs to the essence of the priestly character.

E. H. PLUMPTRE, *Theology and Life*, p. 19.

REFERENCES: viii. 33-ix. 1-8.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 81. viii.-x.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 179. ix. 22.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 179. ix. 22-x. 7.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 89. ix. 23, 24.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 37. x. 1-20.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 274. x. 3.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 397. x. 12-20.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 97. x.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 346. xi. 2, 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 499. xi.—H. Macmillan, *Sunday Magazine*, 1872, p. 187; Parker, vol. iii., p. 104. xi.-xv.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 23. xi.-xxii.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 201. xiii. 12, 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 353. xiii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 273; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 57. xiii. 44.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 131. xiii. 47-59 and xiv. 33-57.—H. Macmillan, *Sunday Magazine*, 1867, p. 674. xiii.-xiv.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 111. xiv. 4-7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 547. xiv. 7.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 37. xiv. 11.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 37. xiv. 30.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 131. xiv. 34.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 132. xiv. 35.—G. Martin, *Penny Pulpit*, Nos. 277, 278; J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 200. xiv. 53.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 305. xvi. 10.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 133.

Chap. xvi., ver. 22—"And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (in the margin "a land of separation").

The solitude of the sin-bearer is something altogether distinct from the solitude of the Holy One. The solitude of holiness separated Him from sinners; but that separation, which made Him lead in His humanity a strange, lonesome life, yet brought Him into such full contact with all the glorious beings and the realities of the spirit-world, that such a solitude could hardly be looked upon with any considerable regret, or be the source of actual pain. The solitude of the sin-bearer is different from that of the Representative of holiness and purity.

Consider the causes of this solitude. (1) Wherever sin exists, it is an isolating principle. Its tendency is to induce seclusion and separation, to shut the person who is possessed

of it from all connection with that which is outside itself. (2) The scapegoat was to bear upon its head all the confessed iniquity of the children of Israel, and to bear it into a land of separation. Christ was the Scapegoat of the human family. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that He, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself to God. The scapegoat finds the land of separation at last, all alone in the darkness. He bore our sins into the land not inhabited. No witnessing spirit can find them there; no denizen of those dreary regions can rediscover them. They are lost sight of by man; the angels find them obliterated from their view; and God Himself has turned His back upon them, and left them in the land of separation.

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 267.

References: xvi. 30.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1923. xvi. 34.—H. Melvill, *Golden Lectures*, 1856 (*Penny Pulpit*, No. 2548); J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 7; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 95. xvi.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 530, and vol. v., p. 8; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 371. xvii. 8, 9—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, p. 30. xvii. 11.—A. Lindesie, *The Gospel of Grace*, p. 20. xix. 9, 10.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 134. xix. 16, 17.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 334.

Chap. xix., ver. 17.—"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

The duty of brotherly admonition or reproof.

I. Consider what the duty is. St. Paul uttered a great truth when he said, "We are members one of another." If we be members one of another, there must be relative duties which could not exist were these mutual relationships wholly destroyed. We may not act with a view to ourselves alone. If there be an obligation upon us, from the very fact of our creation, to have reference in all we do to the benefit of our brethren, we cannot shift off from ourselves the duty of brotherly admonition or reproof. If we see a brother or neighbour pursuing a course which is likely to provoke God's wrath and must issue in ruin, then we are altogether and grievously at fault if we "suffer sin upon him" and do not strive to bring him to repentance and amendment.

II. There are certain rules and motives to be noticed as regulating the careful performance of the duty which the text lays down. (1) He who takes upon himself the duty of

reproving another is required toproceed with much delicacy and caution. It by no means holds good that wherever a man sees vice, he is bound to rebuke it. We do not want a headlong and quixotic chivalry, fancying itself commissioned to break a lance with all whom it may meet on the highways of the land. (2) Since the end of reproof is mainly the well-being of the party reproved, there is to be a careful avoidance of that indiscriminate and unqualified censure which is calculated to disgust, and we should show by the tenderness of our dealing that, though we dare excuse nothing, we know how to distinguish between an involuntary betrayal and an unblushing rebellion. (3) The reproof should be given privately rather than publicly. (4) If we hope that our admonition will carry any weight, we must take heed that we are not ourselves chargeable with the fault that we reprove in others.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1970.

REFERENCES: xix. 18.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 207. xix. 30.—*New Manual of Sunday-school Addresses*, p. 238; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, 1880, p. 213. xix. 36.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 250; R. W. Dale, *Sunday Magazine*, 1866, p. 89; Parker, vol. iii., p. 135.

Chap. xx., ver. 26.—"And ye shall be holy unto Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine."

I. The holiness of saints depends upon no outward condition, requires no special gift of nature or of Providence, of understanding or wisdom, nay, I may say, of grace. It need not be shown in any one form; it does not require the largeness of any one grace; still less does it consist in austere sadness, or stern constraint, or rigid severity as to ourselves or others, except as to our sins. The blessed company of the redeemed saints have and have not found one road to heaven. One road they found, in that they were saved through one Redeemer, looking on to Him and believing in Him before He came or looking to Him when He had come. But all else in their outward lot was different. They were "redeemed to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

II. Holiness was made for all. It is the end for which we were made, for which we were redeemed, for which God the Holy Ghost is sent down and shed abroad in the hearts that

will receive Him. God did not will to create us as perfect. He willed that we, through His grace, should become perfect. But what He willed that we should be, that, if our will fail not, we must become. His almighty will vouchsafes to depend on ours. What God commands; what God wills; what God so willed that He made us for this alone, that we should be holy, and being holy, should share His holiness and bliss—that must be within our reach if we will.

III. The mistake of mistakes is to think that holiness consists in great or extraordinary things, beyond the reach of ordinary men. It has been well said, "Holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing common things uncommonly well." Few can ever do great things, and the few who can do them can each do but few. But every one can study the will of God, and can give great diligence to know it and to do what he knows. Your daily round of duty is your daily path to come nearer unto God.

E. B. PUSEY, *Parochial and Cathedral Sermons*, p. 161.

REFERENCES: xx. 26.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 136. xxii. 20.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 117. xxii. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1879. xxii. 32.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 137. xxiii. 5, 9-11, 15, 16, 34, 36.—J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, pp. 55, 65, 82, 134. xxiii. 33-44.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 376.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 43.—"That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

GOD made the children of Israel to dwell in booths,—made in the sense of causing to dwell safely. And God would have the children of the people who dwelt in booths keep this fact in remembrance generation after generation.

I. The text reminds us of conditions of life very like this dwelling in booths. (1) A feeble body, answering its purpose many years, is like dwelling in booths. (2) Providing by slender means all that is really needful for a large family is like dwelling in booths. (3) A morbidly sensitive spirit kept sound is like dwelling in booths. (4) A nature prone to gross evil and kept from the power of temptation is like dwelling in booths. (5) A Church preserved in peace and unity, with the elements of evil within it and evil influences around it, is another example of God making to dwell in booths. (6) To have lived in a day of small things, and gradually to have come into a day of great things, is to have been made to dwell in booths.

II. The text exhibits God as sufficient for us in the most necessitous and dangerous circumstances. (1) God hath in Himself all that is necessary for the working out of His will. (2) God uses agents and instruments, but is not dependent on any of the agents and instruments which He employs. (3) God is conscious of His sufficiency. (4) There is but one thing which prevents our fully experiencing the sufficiency of God, and that is sin, wilful and persistent sin.

III. The text points out a duty of remembrance which we are all liable to neglect. God's mercy to a family in previous generations places the present members of that family under obligation: "That your generations may *know*." The knowledge which God requires is (1) knowledge in the sense of information, and (2) knowledge in the sense of recognition. The recognition is of mercies in the past. To this God attaches so much importance that He founds a festival as a means of securing it.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 47.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 42.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 1. xxiii. 44.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 119. xxiii.—xxvii.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 223. xxiv. 5, 6, and xxv. 9, 10. —J. Fleming, *The Gospel in Leviticus*, pp. 91, 123.

Chap. xxv., vers. 10-13.—"**And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.**"

THE Old Testament jubilee was meant to be a type of the entire New Testament dispensation in three points, imaging by its Sabbatic character the Gospel rest in Christ, by its unreserved deliverance of captives and slaves the Christian redemption from guilt and spiritual bondage, and by its universal restitution of property to the poor and needy the fulness of that inheritance which is treasured up for all the faithful in Christ, whose unsearchable riches, like the national possessions, opened up by the jubilee, enrich all, without impoverishing any who make good their title.

I. The first element of jubilee gladness, common to the Jew of old and the Christian amid the celebrations of the Gospel age, is the joy of distinction or of privilege. There was not a single memorial of blessing or promise, temporal or spiritual, which the jubilee did not recall, and hold up before the eyes of that most favoured nation, so that it was on God's part an

impressive reiteration of His covenant, and on their part a grateful recognition that they were indeed a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." The Christian Church, and we as members of it, are privileged (1) as to safety; (2) as to character; (3) as to work; (4) as to suffering.

II. The second great element of the gladness of jubilee is the joy of stability and progression. Traces of progress are to be found in every leading country of the Christian world. The last half-century has seen the cause of missions pass through all its phases, and encounter all its perils from ridicule, neglect, hope deferred, till now it ranks perhaps as the most distinctive and glorious feature of our age.

III. The third element in the jubilee gladness is the joy of anticipation or consummation. We believe that faith and hope shall in God's own time effect a marvellous conquest of this long-revolted earth, and that love, working in a united and purified Church, shall through great periods gather up and treasure the spoils of victory. But it is to Christ's coming that we look forward and hasten, as the crown and consummation of Christian hope.

J. CAIRNS, *Jubilee Services*, 1856.

ALL men ultimately get their living out of the soil. There is a recognition of this in the first chapters of Genesis. Man is placed in a garden to till it, and to eat its fruits. He has no other way of living, and will never have any other. Every human being must have some real relation, direct or indirect, to a certain extent of soil. To get man rightly related to the soil, in such a way that he shall most easily get his food from it, this is the underlying question of all history, its key-note and largest achievement.

I. There are two forces which draw men to the soil: (1) a natural, almost instinctive, sense of keeping close to the source of life, as a wise general does not allow himself to be separated from his supplies; (2) the pride, and greed, and love of power of the strong. In all ages the relation of man to the soil has been characterised by deep and cruel injustice. The main oppression in the world has been a denial of man's natural rights in the soil.

II. The remarkable feature of the Jewish commonwealth is its anticipatory legislation against probable and otherwise certain abuses. The struggles of other nations and the skill of statesmanship have been to correct abuses; in the Jewish

commonwealth they were foreseen and provided against. The Jewish theocracy had for one of its main features a system of Sabbaths curiously and profoundly arranged for the interpenetration of Divine and political principles. Every half-century formed a grand Sabbatical circle. The fiftieth year, or year of jubilee, settled at the outset the problem that no other people ever solved except through ages of struggle and revolution.

III. Its design and effect are evident. (1) It was a bar to monopoly of the land. (2) It was a perpetual lesson in hope and encouragement. It was a constant assertion of equality. (3) It fostered patriotism, a virtue that thrives best on the soil. It kept alive in every man a sense of ownership in his country. (4) It was an inwrought education of the family, fostering a sense of its dignity, and guarding the sanctity of marriage and legitimacy of birth.

IV. Though a political measure, it is informed with spiritual significance. It shadows forth the recovery from evil, the undoing of all burdens that weigh down humanity, the eternal inheritance awaiting God's children when His cycle is complete.

T. T. MUNGER, *The Freedom of Faith*, p. 171.

REFERENCES: xxv. 11.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 86. xxv. 55.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 138. xxv.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 32; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 379.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 10.—"Ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new."

THERE is in these words a promise as to the fulness of the Divine gifts which has a far wider range and nobler application than to the harvests and granaries of old Palestine.

We may take the text in that aspect: I. As containing God's pledge that these outward gifts shall come in *unbroken continuity*. It may be good that we should have to trust Him even when the storehouse is empty; it may be good for us to know something of want; but that discipline comes seldom, and is never carried very far. God's machinery for distribution is perfect, and its very perfection, with the constancy of the resulting blessings, robs Him of His praise and hinders our gratitude. By assiduity He loses admiration.

II. May we not apply the same thought of the unbroken continuity of God's gifts to the higher region of our spiritual experience? His supplies of wisdom, love, joy, peace, power, to our souls, are always enough and more than enough for our wants.

He means that there should be no parentheses of famine in our Christian life. The source is full to overflowing, and there are no limits to the supply. The only limit is our capacity, which, again, is largely determined by our desire.

III. We may also see in this text the prescription of a duty as well as the announcement of a promise. There is direction given here as to our manner of receiving God's gifts, as well as large assurance as to His manner of bestowing them. All through our lives wisdom and faith say, "Bring forth the old because of the new." Accept cheerfully the law of constant change under which God has set us. Welcome the new, treasure the old, and in both see the purpose of that loving Father who, Himself unchanged, changeth all things, "fulfils Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

A. MACLAREN, *Weekday Evening Addresses*, p. 11.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 13.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 139. xxvi. 25.—*Ibid.*, p. 140. xxvi. 36.—*Ibid.* xxvii. 32.—*Ibid.*, p. 141.

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Chap. x., ver. 29.—"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

THIS text expresses the essential spirit of the Jewish dispensation. It is the essential spirit of all God's dispensations. His chief word to man everywhen and everywhere is "Come."

I. This leads me to lay down this general principle—God's privileges, the gifts which He bestows, and the advantages which He confers on some are never intended to be exclusive. They are never meant to dishearten men and drive them to despair, but always to be the means of drawing them to Himself. If God gives to one man advantages which He denies to another, it is that the first may be His minister to bring that other to share in His joy. Ministry, like mercy, is "twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

II. The invitation is "Come with us, and we will do you good."

(1) Come with us to the house of God. Man is a spirit, and a man's spirit rests only in communing with God and doing

the Father's mission. The man who has lifted his soul up from the earth by holy contemplations on the first day of the week will find himself strong to resist the temptation to grovel during the rest. (2) Come with us to the word of truth. There is no condition, there are no circumstances, for which blessed words are not to be found in that book, words such as no mere man could speak to you. Come with us to the word of truth. Learn with us to make it the man of your counsel, the way-book of your pilgrimage. (3) Come with us to the living Saviour. Come and listen to His message of mercy; come and stand before the cross on Calvary; look on Him whom you too have pierced; mourn, and hear for yourself the blessed words, "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." (4) Come with us to the Father's home on high. "Come with us, and we will do you good."

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Aids to the Development of the Divine Life*, No. IV.

REFERENCES: x. 29.—A. Raleigh, *From Dawn to Perfect Day*, p. 123; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 916; R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 95; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 339, and xii., p. 13; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, 1887, p. 123; A. K. H. B., *Towards the Sunset*, p. 147. x. 29-31.—A. Maclaren, *The Secret of Power*, p. 251; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 36. x. 29-32.—W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 1st series, p. 154. x. 29-36.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 183. x. 35.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 368.

Chap. x., vers. 35, 36.—"And it came to pass, when the ark set forward that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

THE words of the text were the morning and evening prayer of the children of Israel.

I. Prayer is the best means of reminding ourselves of the presence of God. To place ourselves in His hands before we go forth on our journey, on our pleasure, on our work; to commit ourselves again to Him before we retire to rest—this is the best security for keeping up our faith and trust in Him in whom we all profess to believe, whom we all expect to meet after we leave the world.

II. Prayer is also the best security for our leading a good and happy life. It has been well said twice over by Sir Walter Scott that prayer to the almighty Searcher of hearts is the best check to murmurs against Providence, or to the inroad of worldly passions, because nothing else brings before us so strongly their inconsistency and unreasonableness.

III. No one can pretend to prescribe what another's prayers should be; that each man must know best for himself. But the general spirit in which they should be offered is well expressed in the two great prayers of the text. Whatever may be our particular petition to God in the morning, we must have this object steadily before us: that He will rise and go forth with us to our daily duties and enjoyments, that He may be in our thoughts throughout the day, and that His enemies may flee before Him on every occasion when they lurk for us. And in the evening we have no less before us the desire that God may return to us, however much we have offended Him during the day, that He may turn again and make the light of His countenance to shine upon us.

A. P. STANLEY, *Sermons in the East*, p. 81.

REFERENCES: x. 35, 36.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 39; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 220. xi. 1.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, 1884, p. 42. xi. 1-3.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 190. xi. 11.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 28. xi. 16, 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 276. xi. 23.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 160; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 363; Parker, vol. iv., p. 51.

Chap. xi., ver. 29.—"And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"

ELDAD and Medad seem instances of unlicensed preaching and prophesying; and this, at a time of scanty knowledge and rare spiritual illumination, was not without its dangers. So thought Joshua, and, jealous for Moses' supremacy, besought him to rebuke them. But the great prophet, wholly wanting in the thought of self, rebuked Joshua instead. "Enviest thou," he said, "for my sake?" and then added, in words of noble hyperbole, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"

1. The first thought that occurs to us in reading this scene is the good, felt by the greatest, of zeal and enthusiasm. And the second is, how to discover it, how to encourage it in God's service. But then comes the further question, Have these men the prophet's capacity? Have they that primary want, the prophet's faith? Have they fire, perseverance, and courage? (1) The prophet's faith. Take away from the prophet this faith in the living God, speaking to him, teaching him, encouraging him, in the midst of life's sorrows and temptations, and he is nothing. Give him that belief, and his confidence, his courage, is unshaken (2) There is the prophet's belief in the moral

order underlying the established order of things, as the only safe and sure foundation on which peace and prosperity in a nation can be built.

II. The prophetic message, however varied its tone, however startling its communication, is always in substance, as of old, the same: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

III. "Would that the people of the Lord were all prophets!" Would that we had all more of the fire of enthusiasm, leading us to go forth and act, and learn in acting, not waiting till we have solved all doubts or perfected some scheme of action!

IV. Zeal may often make mistakes, but it is better than no zeal. Truth is not merely correctness, accuracy, the absence of error, nor even the knowledge of the laws of nature. It is also the recognition of the moral and spiritual bases of life, and the desire to promote and teach these among men.

A. G. BUTLER, *The Oxford Review*, April 29th, 1885.

REFERENCES: xi. 29.—H. Melvill, *Lothbury Lectures*, p. 168; Parker, vol. iv., p. 52; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 463.

Chap. xi., vers. 31-34.—"And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah."

NOTICE: I. The perpetual resurrections of easily besetting sins. (1) Look at the side from which the temptation came. It was distinctly a question of lust. Lust was strong in the people, the love of the satisfaction of the bodily appetites for the sake of the momentary pleasure they bring. Appetite runs swiftly to lust in every one of us; each act of indulgence opens a mouth which craves to be fed. (2) Look at the special season when the easily besetting sin rose up and again made them its slave. There is a backwater of temptation which is more deadly than its direct assaults. Just when the consciousness of a triumph seems to permit and justify disarmament for a moment, the subtle foe with whom you have to deal will steal in on you, and win a treacherous victory.

II. There comes a point in the history of the indulgence of besetting sins when God ceases to strive with us and for us against them, and lets them have their way. (1) God has great patience with the weaknesses and sins of the flesh. But it is a dreadful mistake to suppose that therefore He thinks lightly of them. He regards them as sins that must be conquered and, no matter by what sharp discipline, extirpated and killed. (2)

Hence all the severer discipline by which the Lord seeks to purge them, the various agencies by which He fights with us and for us against their tyrannous power. (3) Let alone by God. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone," is one among the most awful sentences in the word of God.

III. The end of that way is inevitably and speedily a grave. The grave of lust is one of the most awful of the inscriptions on the headstone of the great cemetery, the world. No ghosts are so sure to haunt their graves as the ghosts of immolated faculties and violated vows. Each act of indulgence makes the grave wider and deeper where the whole breadth of Godlike faculty will at length be buried.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 279.

REFERENCES: xi. 31.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 180. xi.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 292. xii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 282. xii. 1-16.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 307. xii. 3.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 138; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 400; I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 79. xii. 6-8.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 111. xii. 10.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 228. xii.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 198. xiii. 16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 340. xiii. 18-20.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 152.

Chap. xiii., ver. 25.—"And they returned from searching of the land after forty days."

CONSIDER what duty or privilege may be shadowed out to us by the mission of "the spies" to the Holy Land, which God Himself ordered. It shows us the heart desiring, the imagination picturing, the intellect grasping, the faith appropriating, that which is not yet seen. We are to study and survey the land, to have the will to enter, and the faith to pluck, and prayer to bring home its fruits.

I. Those who have not yet really entered the Canaan of the present time, the invisible kingdom of Christ, should "send on" their thoughts more definitely and practically into those things which give a man peace, and on the borders of which we are already standing.

II. When we come to deal with any special difficulty in life, we should do well first to compass it in our own mind, and acquainting ourselves with it as accurately as we can beforehand, calculate the undertaking. We should go round and round the trial, the temptation, or the enterprise in our own thoughts before

we encounter it. Almost all the great battles of life are fought first, and all the great victories of life are won first, in anticipation in a man's own breast.

III. Previously to prayer it is an excellent habit to "send on" the thoughts among the promises. Let faith pioneer the way. Send your mind to find and gather the promises which cluster round the petition you are going to make.

IV. There is a still higher use of the faculty of prescient thought, for about nothing should our minds be so busy as about the land of our eternal inheritance. These are the thoughts which do a man good. They are heaven-born images, which meet us by "the way of the wilderness."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 68.

REFERENCES: xiii. 30.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 53. xiii. 32.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 197. xiii.-xiv. 1-25.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 206. xiii., xiv.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 323. xiv. 2.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 121. xiv. 6, 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 197. xiv. 7, 8.—R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 120. xiv. 10.—H. T. Robjohns, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 88.

Chap. xiv., ver. 11.—"And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?"

NOTHING is more surprising to us at first reading than the history of God's chosen people; it seems strange that they should have acted as they did age after age, in spite of the miracles which were vouchsafed to them.

I. Hard as it is to believe, miracles certainly do not make men better; the history of Israel proves it. The only mode of escaping this conclusion is to fancy that the Israelites were much worse than other nations, which accordingly has been maintained. But as we see that in every other point they were exactly like other nations, we are obliged to conclude, not that the Israelites were more hard-hearted than other people, but that a miraculous religion is not much more influential than other religions.

II. Why should the sight of a miracle make us better than we are? (1) It may be said that a miracle would startle us, but would not the startling pass away? Could we be startled for ever? (2) It may be urged that perhaps that startling might issue in amendment of life; it might be the beginning of a new life though it passed away itself. This is very true; sudden emotions—fear, hope, gratitude, and the like—all do

produce such results sometimes; but why is a miracle necessary to produce such effects? Other things startle us besides miracles; we have a number of accidents sent by God to startle us. If the events of life which happen to us now produce no lasting effect upon us, then it is only too certain that a miracle would produce no lasting effect upon us either.

III. What is the real reason why we do not seek God with all our hearts if the absence of miracles be not the reason, as assuredly it is not? There is one reason common both to us and the Jews: heartlessness in religious matters, an evil heart of unbelief; both they and we disobey and disbelieve, because we do not love.

IV. In another respect we are really far more favoured than the Israelites. They had outward miracles; we have miracles that are not outward, but inward. Our miracles consist in the Sacraments, and they do just the very thing which the Jewish miracles did not: they really touch the heart, though we so often resist their influence.

V. Let us then put aside vain excuses, and instead of looking for outward events to change our course of life, be sure of this, that if our course of life is to be changed, it must be from within. Let us rouse ourselves and act as reasonable men before it is too late; let us understand, as a first truth in religion, that love of heaven is the only way to heaven.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Selection from the Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 432. (See also *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 217.)

REFERENCES: xiv. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1498 (see also *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 241); Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 240. xiv. 21.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 55. xiv. 24.—J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 28; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 281; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 538; R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 381. xiv. 26-45.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 213. xiv. 27.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 55.

Chap. xiv., ver. 31.—"But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised."

I. Notice how completely Almighty God recognises the sense of preciousness which all parents with a spark of heart in them attach to their children, and how God turns the faculty and instinct of affection in parents to their children to the parents' condemnation if they will not use their affection or their

responsibility in the direction of securing eternal life for those whom they love.

II. Children, in the providence of God, and according to the rules of God's government, do, in a certain degree, share their parents' privileges, suffer their parents' penalties, nay, even sin with their parents' sin.

III. The children did not altogether inherit the parents' punishment. In some degree they were spared the consequences of their parents' guilt. The parents must not go up to Canaan to possess that pleasant land, but the Lord will bring the children up when their parents are gone.

IV. The great reason why the children of Israel refused to go up to the land of Canaan was a want of faith. So the great reason why so-called Christian parents do not take the trouble to prepare their children for eternity is that their own personal belief about eternity is not as strong as it should be.

The duties of parents towards their children are: (1) to give them careful and continuous instruction concerning the things of God; (2) to teach them by their life and example that these things are true; (3) to pray for their children; (4) to have faith that God will bless their children.

BISHOP THOROLD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 17.

REFERENCES: xiv. 43.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 222. xv. 30-36.—*Ibid.*, p. 230. xv. 37-39.—W. F. Hook, *Parish Sermons*, p. 1. xv. 37-41.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 239. xv. 38.—H. Sinclair Patterson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 200. xv.-xix.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 273.

Chap. xvi., ver 3.—**"And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy," etc.**

I. STRICTLY speaking, the tribe of Levi was not more appointed or called by God than the tribe of Reuben or Judah. The family of Aaron was not more called by God than any Israelitish family. Each tribe was to occupy its own place in the host; each family had some work to do which God had fixed for it, and not for any other. But it would have been a most minute and mischievous legislation which attempted to define the tasks that should be performed by each family or person. The Mosaic legislation attempted nothing of the kind; it affirmed a principle of universal and individual application; it established an order which embodied that principle, and showed how all departures from it must necessarily lead to confusion; it enforced

its own decrees against that order more solemnly, more tremendously, than against any other parts of the society.

II. The Mosaic history is a continual witness to the tendency which there was in the Divinely appointed order to become a caste, a perpetual record of the ways in which God was counterworking that tendency. The Aaronic family was appointed to offer the sacrifices; it was to show that God Himself was the Inventor of them. Woe to it if it tried to persuade the people that it was the inventor of them or could make them more acceptable!

III. Korah and his company were the assertors of a popular maxim. But unhappily that popular maxim would have been destructive of the people, would have been fatal to their moral, political, spiritual, freedom. Korah would have asserted for himself and the other families of the tribe of Levi the privilege and right of offering sacrifices. Dathan and Abiram would have claimed that privilege and right for all the tribes. There was a lie in the words. They at once introduced the principle of which sacrifice is the renunciation, the principle against which the family of Aaron was the permanent protest.

IV. Since it is the tendency of a mere national organisation to become exclusive, to assert the dignity of birth or the sacredness of property above the dignity and sacredness of humanity, the business of the priest in each land will be especially to protect it against this danger. The priest presents Christ's finished sacrifice for the whole human race—for rich and poor, high and low. He must expect to go down alive into a deeper pit than that which received Korah and his company if he shows that wealth, honours, distinctions of any kind, are the objects of his search, not remembering that "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 204.

Chap. xvi., vers. 8-11.—"And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi," etc.

I. THE sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram was this: they were discontented with the arrangement made for public worship by the choosing out of Aaron and his family to be priests. The argument they used was a very plausible one, because it depended upon the great truth of the Lord's being with all His people, consecrating and sanctifying them all, making them all in a certain sense holy to the Lord, in a certain sense priests.

It also flattered the vanity of the people, and strengthened them in the notion that they were oppressed by their rulers.

II. The answer to this argument was that Moses and Aaron had not lifted themselves up at all; the Lord had lifted them up. This was the answer which was ultimately given, with very terrible emphasis, by the swallowing up of Korah and his company. Korah and his company had laid great stress on the fact that all the congregation of the Lord were holy. Moses and Aaron might very well have replied, that they for their part by no means questioned the fact. Moses had never represented the choice of Aaron and his family as a declaration that they only of the people were holy. Nothing could be a greater mistake on the part of the people than to take this view of the priestly consecration.

III. Between our own priesthood and that of the Israelites there is still the great common ground of ministry before God in behalf of others which must be at the basis of every religion. Hence both priest and people may learn a lesson. The priest may learn that his office does not imply that he is holier or better than his brethren, but that it does imply greater responsibility, greater opportunities of good, greater sin if he does evil. And the people may learn to be gentle and considerate to those who are over them in the Lord, not to be ready to find fault and condemn, but rather to be charitable, and forbearing, and gentle.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 124.

REFERENCES: xvi. 8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 241. xvi. 10.—C. P. Reichel, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 271. xvi. 23, 24.—I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 114. xvi. 32-35.—C. Kingsley, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 191. xvi. 35.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 56. xvi. 38.—*Ibid.* xvi. 47, 48.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 341; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 209. xvi. 48.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 353; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 225; Parker, vol. iii., p. 249. xvi., xvii.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 339. xvii. 12, 13.—C. J. Vaughan, *Sunday Magazine*, 1866, p. 457. xvii. 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 154. xviii. 20.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 57. xviii. 27.—*Ibid.*, p. 58. xix. 2, 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 527. xx. 1-12.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 270. xx. 1-14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 205. xx. 1-29.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 358.

Chap. xx., vers. 10, 11 (with Psalm cvi. 32, 33).—"Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice."

THIS is a memorable incident in the Jews' history, and it is rich in warning to us at this day. Moses had failed in his duty

towards God, and that in three particulars. (1) He had failed in strict obedience. God had bidden him speak to the rock, and he had smitten it, smitten it twice. (2) He had shown temper, used hard language. "Hear now, ye rebels." (3) He had taken to himself the credit of supplying the Israelites with water. "Must *we* fetch water for you out of the rock?"

I. The first lesson to be learned from Moses at Meribah is the danger of departing, in the least jot or tittle, from any law of God.

II. The second is the immense importance attached to temperate speech, the necessity of keeping a check on temper and not letting ourselves be moved to hot and angry words. The want of self-control was very heavily visited upon Moses and upon "Aaron, the saint of the Lord." Because of it they were shut out of Canaan.

III. The scene at the rock of Meribah is further useful as carrying our thoughts upwards to Him who is the source of all our hopes, the nourishment of our soul, the very life of our religion, the Lord Jesus Christ. The rock in the desert was but a type and a shadow; the reality it typified is represented in Jesus Christ. All other waters after a while must fail; the water that Christ can give "shall be in us as a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life."

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 100.

REFERENCES: xx. 11.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, p. 166; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 157; T. R. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 170.

Chap. xx., vers. 23-29.—"Aaron died there in the top of the mount."

I. WE may learn a salutary lesson from the death of Aaron in its merely literal bearing. Aaron, the high-priest, had to ascend Mount Hor clad in his priestly robes of office; but he must be stripped of them there, because he must die there. He could not carry his dignity or the emblems of it into the next world. He must lay them down at the grave's brink. There is nothing which the world gives that men can carry with them when death lays hold of them. Even all which outwardly pertains to spiritual dignity, and which brings men into relation with things that are imperishable and eternal, must be left behind, and the individual man, as God's accountable creature, must appear before his Maker in judgment. There is one thing imperishable and one dignity which even death cannot tarnish. The imperishable thing is the life which the Spirit of God imparts to

the soul, and which connects the soul with God. The deathless dignity is that of being children of God.

II. Aaron must be stripped of his robes, and his son clad with them in his stead. This reminds us that while the priests under the law were not suffered to continue by reason of death, yet the office of the priesthood did not lapse. Aaron's robes were not buried with him. His successor was provided. Yet the very thought that he needed a successor, that the office must be transmitted from one to another, leads us to think of the contrast which the Apostle draws between the priests under the law and Him who abideth always. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 599.

REFERENCES: xx. 14-21.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 258. xx. 17.—W. Page Roberts, *Reasonable Service*, p. 148. xx. 22-29.—G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 132.

Chap. xx., vers. 27, 28.—"And Moses did as the Lord commanded, and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation," etc.

I. THE first and most superficial aspect of death is that it is the close of an earthly career. There could be no question as to the prominence of Aaron's career. (1) In the great work of leading the children of Israel out of Egypt to the confines of the Promised Land Aaron is only second to Moses. (2) Aaron was the first high-priest of the chosen people. His consecration was of itself calculated to awe the minds of Israel, and it was followed by high sanctions of his office, which must have done so still more.

II. Aaron was morally a weak man. He had no such grasp of principle as would enable him to hold out against strong pressure. His weakness became conspicuous on the critical occasion of Moses going up to Sinai to receive the sacred law. Aaron was left below in virtual command, in a position of responsibility for which, as the event proved, he was not fitted. The Greeks had a proverb that leadership will show what a man really is, and so it was with Aaron. His weakness is implied in the allusion in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity."

III. Nothing is more noticeable in the account of Aaron's death than his deliberate preparation for it. He did not let death come on him; he went to meet it. There was a twofold motive in the act of Moses in stripping Aaron of his garments.

(1) It showed that the office of the high-priesthood did not depend on the life of any single man, and (2) it reminded Aaron personally of the solemn truth of the utter solitariness of the soul in death.

IV. The phrase of Moses, "Aaron was gathered to his people," seems to point to a world in which the bygone generations of men still live, a world of the existence of which God's ancient people were well assured, though they knew much less of it than we.

H. P. LIDDON, *The Family Churchman*, April 27th, 1887.

REFERENCES: xx. 28.—C. J. Vaughan, *Sunday Magazine*, 1873, p. 169. xx. 29.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 267. xx., xxi.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 285. xxi. 4.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 187; Parker, vol. iii., p. 276. xxi. 4, 5.—F. Strutt, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 161. xxi. 4, 9.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 156; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1722. xxi. 5.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 14. xxi. 5-9.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 287. xxi. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 285.

Chap. xxi., vers. 8, 9.—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."

I. THIS history would sound a strange one, and would suggest some mystery underlying it, even if it stood alone, with no afterword of Scripture claiming a special significance for it. But it is stranger and more mysterious still when we come to our Lord's appropriation of it to Himself (John iii. 14, 15). It is strange and most perplexing to find the whole symbolism of Scripture on this one occasion reversed, and Christ, not Satan, likened to the serpent here. How shall we account for this? What can be the points of comparison? Many answers have been given to this question, but there is only one which really meets the difficulties of the case. As a serpent hurt and a serpent healed, so, in like manner, as by man came death, by man should come also the resurrection from the dead; "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one should many be made righteous."

II. The brazen serpent, so like in colour, in form, in outward show, to those that hurt the people, was yet unlike in one point, and that the most essential point of all: in this, namely, that it was not poisonous, as they were. Exactly so the resemblance of Christ to His fellow-men, most real in many things, was in one point only apparent. He only *seemed* to have that

poison which they really had. He was harmless, holy, undefiled, separate from sinners.

III. We may imagine that in some of the Israelites perverse thoughts may have been at work, inducing them to make in the very presence of life a covenant with death. So we, giving way to similar temptations, but in a far guiltier spirit of unbelief, may be refusing to look at Him who, though crucified in weakness, is yet "the power of God unto salvation in every one that believeth."

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 228

REFERENCES: xxi. 9.—T. Champness, *Little Foxes*, p. 132; W. Walters, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 237; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1500; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 214. xxi. 16-18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 776. xxi. 17.—G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 197; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 169. xxi. 22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 156. xxi.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 374. xxii. 1-41.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 207. xxii. 2-21.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 11. xxii. 10-12.—E. W. Shalders, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 296. xxii. 12.—*Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 477. xxii. 12-20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 204. xxii. 15.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 97. xxii.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 445.

Chap. xxii., ver. 18.—**"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."**

THIS was a brave answer, but it was spoilt by what Balaam added: "Tarry ye here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." As if God were likely to change His mind! The word "tarry" was a clear tampering with the voice of God. Balaam met his death at the hands of the people whom he had betrayed into sin. We may learn the following lessons from his life:—

I. The first is to beware of tampering with conscience. When we are tempted, conscience stands in the way as an adversary, flashes before us some great word of God, forbidding us to do what we were bent on doing. Well for us if we do not struggle with that angel adversary, if, at the sight of his glittering sword, we bow down and say, "I have sinned"!

II. We learn from the life of Balaam how vain are good wishes when separated from good actions. We must live the life of the righteous if we would die the death of the righteous.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." But such a death must be preceded by a life "in the Lord."

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 109.

REFERENCE: S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 178.

Chap. xxii., vers. 20-22.—"And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do," etc.

IN the story of Balaam we have a seeming contradiction. God said, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them," and yet "God's anger was kindled because he went." How can these things be?

I. When God sent this message to Balaam, it was not the first time that Balaam had sought an answer from God on this very subject of whether he should go or not. Something had made him fear to go and speak the bitter curse till he had learned the pleasure of God. His wishes may well be supposed to have been all in one direction; his conscience alone restrained him. In the night came a message from God: "Thou shalt not go." But Balaam persuaded himself that what was wrong yesterday might be right to-day, and that what was God's will at one time might not be God's will at another. God answered the fool according to his folly, and as the wretched man had dared to think of tampering with God, God rewarded him (if we may use the word) by tampering with him. God suffered him to "believe a lie." The lie was but the reflection of the wishes that were lording it in the heart of Balaam, and to these wishes God for a time gave him over.

II. Men are doing precisely as Balaam did every day. Temptation to self-aggrandisement of various kinds comes before us; the only condition is a course of action about the lawfulness of which we are in doubt. We look to see if for some little swerving from the rigorous path of virtue some excuse may not be found. We ask for guidance, perchance with a divided heart, and then, if God speaks to us at all, it is a voice which speaks to a conscience that has become confused and a judgment that has suffered itself to be dispirited, and though the voice may seem to be the voice of God, it is indeed only a lie.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 149.

REFERENCES: xxii. 20-22.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 39. xxii. 22-35.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 315. xxii. 22-36.—*Expositor*, 2nd series,

vol. v., p. 120. xxii. 23.—A. Watson, *Christ's Authority, and Other Sermons*, p. 284. xxii. 26.—C. J. Vaughan, *My Son, Give Me thine Heart*, p. 61; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, 1880, p. 376. xxii. 27.—S. Baring-Gould, *The Preacher's Pocket*, p. 167. xxii. 28-30.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 366; vol. viii., p. 397; Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, April 2nd and 9th, 1885; S. Greg, *A Layman's Legacy*, p. 244. xxii. 34.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 113. xxii. 34, 35.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 34; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 316. xxii. 37.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 59.

Chap. xxii., ver. 38.—"The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak."

THE first and most general account of Balaam would be this: that he was a very eminent person in his age and country, that he was courted and gained by the enemies of Israel, that he promoted a wicked cause in a very wicked way, that he counselled the Moabites to employ their women as a means of seducing the chosen people into idolatry, and that he fell in battle in the war which ensued. Yet when we look into Balaam's history closely, we shall find points of character which may well interest those who do not consider his beginning and his end.

I. He was blessed with God's especial favour. Not only had he the grant of inspiration and the knowledge of God's will, an insight into the truths of morality clear and enlarged, such as we Christians cannot surpass, but he was even admitted to conscious intercourse with God, such as we Christians have not.

II. Balaam was, in the ordinary sense of the word, a very conscientious man. He prayed before taking a new step. He strictly obeyed the commands of God. He said and he did; he acted according to his professions. He showed no inconsistency in word or deed.

III. The strange thing is that while he so spoke and acted, he seemed as in one sense to be in God's favour, so in another and higher to be under His displeasure. Balaam obeyed God from a sense of its being right to do so, but not from a desire to please Him, not from fear and love. His endeavour was, not to please God, but to please self without displeasing God, to pursue his own ends as far as was consistent with his duty. Hence he was not content with ascertaining God's will; he attempted to change it. His asking twice was tempting God. As a punishment God gave him leave to ally himself with His enemies and take part against His people.

IV. The following reflections are suggested by the history of

Balaam: (1) We see how little we can depend in judging of right and wrong on the apparent excellence and high character of individuals. (2) We sin without being aware of it, yet wrath is abroad and in our paths. (3) When we have begun an evil course, we cannot retrace our steps. (4) God gives us warnings now and then, but does not repeat them. Balaam's sin consisted in not acting on what was told him once for all.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 18; also *Selection from the same*, p. 319.

REFERENCES: xxii.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 303. xxii.-xxiv.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 353; Parker, vol. iii., pp. 322, 331. xxii.-xxv.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 388; J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 295. xxiii. 1-26.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 199.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 9.—"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

THE subject of prophecy is one which certainly ought not to be altogether neglected. If it were only for the sake of the many appeals made to it by our Lord and His Apostles, it would have a just claim on our attention.

I. It is a very misleading notion of prophecy if we regard it as an anticipation of history. History, in our common sense of the term, is busy with particular nations, times, places, actions, and even persons. If, in this sense, prophecy were a history written beforehand, it would alter the very condition of humanity, by removing from us our uncertainty as to the future; it would make us acquainted with those times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.

II. What history does not and cannot do, that prophecy does, and for that very reason it is very different from history. Prophecy fixes our attention on principles, on good and evil, on truth and falsehood, on God and on His enemy. Prophecy is God's voice, speaking to us respecting the issue in all time of that great struggle which is the real interest of human life, the struggle between good and evil. Beset as we are by evil within us and without, it is the natural and earnest question of the human mind, What shall be the end at last? And the answer is given by prophecy that it shall be well at last, that there shall be a time when good shall perfectly triumph.

III. Thus, as in the text, Balak, king of the Moabites, calls upon Balaam the prophet to curse Israel. This is the history:

on the one hand there was one people; on the other there was another. Mere history can find no difficulty in determining that the highest good to unborn generations of the human race was involved in the preservation of Israel. It is the comparative good and evil which history can discern in the two nations which determines their respective characters as the representatives at that time and place of that real good and evil whose contest is the enduring subject of prophecy.

T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 333.

Reference: xxiii. 9.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., pp. 281, 292; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 232.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 10.—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

This is a thought in which all the world would agree, if they could speak out their real feelings. Those who are most backward and unwilling to lead the life of the righteous man—even they would wish to die the righteous man's death.

I. By the death of the righteous is not meant merely a happy end, but any circumstances of death whatever after a holy and obedient life. The worst death of those who are accounted righteous before God is better than the best and easiest death of an unrighteous person.

II. Nothing can exceed the apparent truth and piety of Balaam's thoughts concerning death. Yet at the time he uttered them he was about the devil's work, doing all he could to corrupt souls, and make God and man enemies to each other, for the sake of a little filthy lucre. His words have passed into a kind of proverb, as describing a happy death. His own death was perhaps the most miserable of all that are recorded in the Old Testament.

III. Let no man, therefore, deceive himself, nor imagine that all is as yet tolerably right between him and his God, because he feels his heart warm at devout expressions like this of Balaam; because, when he thinks of it, he would wish to die the death of the righteous. Do not rest satisfied with anything short of consistent Christian practice. Other ways may make you comfortable for a time, but this will bring a man peace at the last.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to Tracts for the Times, vol. iv., p. 63.

I. Balaam was half converted, and so he was not converted at all. He would not wholly part with his besetting sin, and so it

mastered him and destroyed him. He would not serve God more than he thought he need, and so he ended in deadly opposition to God, disserving God as greatly as he could, and seducing others from His service, and so soon as he had finished his work of evil losing his life and his soul.

II. What the direct warnings or inspirations of God were to Balaam, that God's voice in His word and in our consciences is to us. The special sin of Balaam was that he indulged and fed with his heart's blood one darling passion (covetousness), and that, not daring or wishing to go against the direct command of God, he tried in every way he could to evade it. While our soul keeps back one thing, while we are contriving in one thing to cheat our conscience and hold back part of the price from God, all is but Balaam-service; we are as yet none of His.

E. B. PUSEY, *Lenten Sermons*, p. 69.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 10.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 42; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 218; T. T. Munger, *The Appeal to Life*, p. 109; M. Dix, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 1; *Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 493; C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons chiefly Practical*, p. 1; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, 1st series, p. 210; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 746; *New Manual of Sunday-school Addresses*, p. 258; C. J. Vaughan, *Harrow Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 247; E. Bickersteth, *Oxford Lent Sermons*, 1858, No. 11; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 218, and vol. xii., p. 221; G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 42; S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 86; R. Heber, *Parish Sermons*, p. 354; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 335, and vol. vii., p. 290; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 17; I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 126

Chap. xxiii., vers. 11, 12.—"And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether."

I. BALAAM is a heathen prophet; he is certainly not produced as a favourable specimen of one. In the New Testament he is represented as the very type of false and evil teachers. Yet the teaching of Balaam is not ascribed to an evil spirit, but to God; he is not treated as a mere pretender to powers which were not his; his knowledge and foresight are acknowledged as real.

II. How then was Balaam a false prophet? His predictions were confirmed; what he spoke of the goodly tents of Israel was fulfilled more perfectly than he dreamed; the star which he saw in his vision did actually arise and shine upon Gentiles as well as Hebrews. That test of truth the prophet Balaam

could well endure. But a man may be false though all his words are true, though he has gifts and endowments of the highest order, though these gifts and endowments proceed, as all proceed, from God.

III. You will not find that Isaiah is true and Balaam false because the one received communications from God and the other did not, nor because Isaiah belonged to the covenant people and Balaam did not. But you will find that Isaiah lived for his people, and not for himself; that he did not value himself upon his gifts, or upon his holiness, or upon anything whatsoever that belonged to him as an individual. The certainty, under every possible discouragement and conflict, that the righteous God would prevail over all that was unrighteous in the universe, the willingness to be made an instrument in carrying out God's purposes, let what would come of him or his character—this is the sign of the true prophet; this is what separates him from the solitary self-seeker, who shrank from the thought of God appearing to set the world right, who only wished when his wishes were purest that he might die the death of the righteous.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 221.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 19.—C. Kingsley, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 172; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2640.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 21.—"The shout of a King is among them."

THERE are three special thoughts which come to us in connection with this text.

I. The first is, the absolute need, if the army of the Lord is to conquer, of the presence of the Lord and of the realisation of His presence by those who are called by His name, and wear His armour, and wield His weapons. It pleases the Lord to let us fight His battles, to give us His armour and His weapons, and to inspire us with His courage, and to fill our enemies with His terror. We have no power except it be given us by Him; we can drive out no darkness of heathenism except the Lord be with us. We want more of our own battle-cry, the "shout of our King," telling of His actual presence with His host.

II. It is also necessary to realise the essential unity of the Church of Christ, of the army of the living God. We should pray and work, and earnestly desire that all the people of the Lord may be one. If we want a reason for the little progress made in the conquest of the world of heathenism for the Lord

of life and glory, if we want to account for the dark and darkening fringe of sin, and misery, and unbelief within the borders of our own land, we can find cause enough for these things in our failure to realise and to work and pray for the ideal of the essential unity of the Church of Christ.

III. Our text inspires us with hope. There is no greater need for us, as individuals or as a united body, than hope. And how can we be otherwise than full of hope when we call to mind that the promise is for us, "The shout of a King is among them"? There is hope for ourselves, and hope for others. Life passes on; friends pass away; strength for effort grows less; unavailing efforts stretch out behind us in a long, increasing line, like wounded men falling down to die in the terrible retreat; but still there is hope—hope that will grow and increase, and come daily nearer to its accomplishment. "The shout of a King is among us," and we cannot be moving on to ultimate defeat. There is a battle, terrible enough, to fight; but victory is the end, not defeat.

E. T. LEEKE, *The Cambridge Review*, Nov. 12th, 1884.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1709. xxiii. 23.—Dawson Burns, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 65; J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Missions*, p. 130; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 205; J. Keble, *Sermons Academical and Occasional*, p. 232.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 26.—**"But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?"**

I. WITH all the favourable traits which may be noticed in the character of Balaam, the features of his besetting sin are plainly marked. The power of money over him seems to have been known, and so when he refused to come Balak hoped to overcome his scruples by the bribe of great promotion. And the prophet's conduct well justified these expectations. He feared God so far that he dared not rebel directly against His will; but he was so much in love with the world's gauds and honours and wealth, that he was ever trying to humour his conscience to bend the line of right to the line of seeming interest. He thought to secure this world and the next; he lost both: he had too much truth to secure the rewards of Balak; he had too little truth to escape the wrath of God.

II. The lesson to be learned from such a character is surely plain for us. Balaam's character is that of the half-hearted Christian. He makes a partial and unwilling sacrifice. He is, like Balaam, an uncertain, irresolute, wavering man, with many

better principles and feelings, but with an undergrowth of evil which he will not utterly root out.

III. From the history of Balaam we learn: (1) the importance to each one of us of being indeed earnest Christians, of giving to God our hearts and our affections; (2) the importance of striving to subdue wholly every separate sin to which we are tempted; (3) the great need we have of seeking earnestly from God the gift of a sincere heart.

S. WILBERFORCE, *Sermons*, p. 169.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 27-xxiv. 14.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 245. xxiii.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 445.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 1.—"And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness."

IN Balaam we have a man who, while his audacity and superstition are monstrous, still has a strong fear of Almighty God upon him, a determination not to disobey Him openly, a hope that at last he may be found on God's side. But it was with him as it is with others who deceive themselves and perform a juggler's trick with their own soul. First they wish to have their own way in life and then have it blessed by God as if it were His way. Next they cease to think it impossible to elude or deceive even God. We see here a man beseeching God to allow him to do what He had twice and thrice forbidden him to do. God punished him by letting him take his own course. And it is after his example that all will be lost who from a high standing fall into wickedness. Take these three points:—

I. If Balaam was lost, it was through himself that he was lost. God gave him both an earnest desire to be saved and the knowledge how to be saved. Yet he is a lost man already when he comes before us. He was lost because he did not follow out his wish into action, and because he did not use the knowledge which he had.

II. What was the means he took for his own destruction, when he had both the wish and the knowledge to be saved? Exactly that which offers itself to us as very natural—an attempt to combine the service of God and the service of the world. He wished to stand well with the Lord God, but he also wished to have a brilliant alliance with and a strong influence over one of the principal personages of his time.

III. Even the disobedient prophet prophesied of Christ; even the disobedient boy serves Christ's will. Both do it without

meaning it; therefore they have no reward. But they cannot choose but serve Him one way or another.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 204.

REFERENCE: xxiv. 1.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 237.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 3.—"The man whose eyes are open hath said."

I. BALAAM was a man whose eye was open in his day. He was a man of splendid natural genius. We puzzle over the definition of genius; but perhaps it is only the open eye, the power to see things simply as they are. In every sphere of man's intellectual activity the man of genius is the seer.

II. Balaam's is at the same time a character of singular perplexity. He had both the open eye and the itching palm. He had power to see realities, while his heart lusted after vanities, and this condition is far from rare. Splendid endowments are often mated with moral narrowness or feebleness. On the lower level of Balaam's life he was base and grovelling; but when God took possession of his genius, he yielded it readily, and then he was true as steel to the vision. But the sensual nature was really master. It dragged the eagle-eyed spirit down. Faint, trembling, before the vision, he soon dropped to his congenial earth again, and finally he buried his splendid genius in the pit.

Notice: (1) The only word which a man says with power is truth. "The word that God also saith, that shall stand." (2) Balaam saw with his open eye that the man who stands with God stands absolutely beyond reach of harm. (3) There was a third thing that Balaam saw: the man whom God blesses is blessed; the man whom God curses is cursed, absolutely and for ever.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, pp. 370, 378.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 9.—"He couched; he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up?"

I. THESE were the words of the Eastern sage, as he looked down from the mountain height upon the camp of Israel, abiding among the groves of the lowland according to their tribes in order, discipline, and unity. Before a people so organised he saw well none of the nations round could stand. He likens them not to the locust swarm, the sea-flood, nor the forest fire, but to the most peaceful and most fruitful sight in nature or in art. They are spread forth like the watercourses which carry verdure and fertility as they flow. Their God-given mission may be stern,

but it will be beneficent. They will be terrible in war; but they will be wealthy, prosperous, civilised, and civilising in peace.

II. The transformation thus wrought in less than two generations in those who had been the wretched slaves of Egypt was plainly owing to their forty years of freedom, but of freedom under a stern military education, of freedom chastened by discipline and organised by law. No nation of those days enjoyed a freedom comparable to that of the old Jews. They were the only constitutional people of the East. The burdensomeness of Moses' law, ere it was overlaid in later days by rabbinical scrupulosity, has been much exaggerated. Little seemed to have been demanded of the Jews save those simple ten commandments which we still hold to be necessary for all civilised society.

III. And their obedience was, after all, a moral obedience, the obedience of free hearts and wills. Without their moral discipline they would have broken up, scattered, or perished, or at least remained as settlers or as slaves among the Arab tribes. With that moral discipline they held together and continued one people till the last; they couched, they lay down as a lion, and none dared rouse them up.

C. KINGSLEY, *Discipline, and Other Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: xxiv. 10-19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 439.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 11.—"Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour."

BALAAM, it need hardly be said, was a very eminent, he was even an extraordinary, man. He lived largely among the wild race of the Midianites, but he had gifts and powers which, so far as we know, were entirely unshared by those among whom he dwelt.

I. (1) He was a careful observer of contemporary events; he was a man of trained political sagacity. (2) He was in possession of a truth which, quite apart from its awful and intrinsic value, gave purpose and meaning to a human life: he believed in one God. (3) He was endowed in a high degree with the gift of supernatural prophecy. Of this gift his closing words to Balak afford one remarkable specimen. His prediction of the star and sceptre that were to arise out of Jacob is not fully satisfied by the conquests of David, of Omri, of John Hyrcanus; it points to the spiritual empire of Jesus Christ. Balaam was in one age what Melchisedek had been in another, and Job in a third—an organ of truth beyond the frontiers of the kingdom of truth.

II. With gifts like these, Balaam was naturally a person of great public consideration. Balak, the king of Moab, seems to have looked upon him as a very powerful wizard. Balak's view of Balaam illustrates the way in which in all ages statesmen are apt to look upon religion and its representatives. They see in it only one of the great forces which modify or control human life, and they desire, by whatever means, to enlist it on the side of the policy or the government which they for the moment represent.

III. The real character of Balaam was a very mixed one. On the one hand, he was a man with a clear idea of duty, based on a certain knowledge of God; on the other, we find that his notion of duty was clearly not what he could discover to be God's will, but only what God would not allow him to ignore. It was a minimising rule of duty.

IV. There are two or three considerations which the history suggests: (1) The ministry of grace and truth to others may be quite independent of the personal character of the minister. (2) It is possible to know a great deal about truth, to make sacrifices for it, to be kept back from honour out of deference to its requirements, and yet to be at heart disloyal to it. (3) The only true safeguard against such a fate as Balaam's is the love of God.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 241.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 11-13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 158. xxiv. 15-24.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 305. xxiv. 15-25.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 341. xxiv. 17.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 166; J. G. Murphy, *The Book of Daniel*, p. 18; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1664. xxv. 6-8.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. i., p. 258. xxv. 11.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 1. xxv. 12.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 60. xxv. 12, 13.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 49. xxv. 13.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 411.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 61.—"And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord."

THE reason why Nadab and Abihu were selected for instant punishment was not necessarily that they had committed a sin more atrocious in itself than that at the same time perpetrated by others of the people, but there were ends to be answered in their case which did not exist in that of other offenders. Nothing could have been better adapted to the impressing both priesthood and people with a sense of the awfulness of instituted ordinances and of the reverence due to every tittle of the law than such a catastrophe as the one before us.

I. Under this crushing trial we read of Aaron one brief sentence, more affecting than the most elaborate description: "And Aaron held his peace." It appears clear from the remainder of the history that Aaron, though he suppressed the signs of sorrow, was disquieted at heart, and so overpowered and overcome as to be scarcely master of his actions. Not only was he forbidden to mourn; he was required to proceed with the business of a complicated ritual. No wonder that, in his agitation and perplexity, he made mistakes in the performance of his office. Moses found that the goat had been burnt without the tabernacle in place of being eaten according to the law. He expostulated with Aaron, and in the whole range of Scripture there are no more pathetic words than Aaron's reply: "Such things have befallen me." God seems to have accepted the excuse, for we read that "Moses was content."

II. From the contentment of Moses, as expressive of the approval of God, we may gather these lessons: (1) The severity of sorrow is accepted as an excuse for some failure in duty. God is not rigid in exacting His dues when our soul is disquieted and cast down within us. (2) The same holds good under circumstances of sickness. We should never ask how a Christian died, but how he lived. The sick-bed is of all places the most unfitted for beginning religion, and so it is frequently the least favourable to the display of its growth.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2021.

REFERENCES: xxvi. 11.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 349. xxvi.—Parker, vol. iii., p. 341, and vol. v., pp. 60, 61. xxvi.-Deut. i. 1.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 315. xxvii. 12-23.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 8. xxvii. 18.—*Ibid.*, p. 61. xxvii.—*Ibid.*, p. 2. xxviii. 10.—*Ibid.*, p. 62. xxxi. 8.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 413; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 218. xxxi. 16.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 409. xxxi. 37.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 63. xxxii. 1-5.—*Ibid.*, p. 17. xxxii. 6.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 219.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 23.—"Be sure your sin will find you out."

I. EVERY sin brings its punishment.

II. Every sinner will ultimately be found out by his sin, and be obliged to confront it.

III. There is a way of escape from the punishment of sin. It must be one or the other—salvation by faith in Christ, and sin put away by an atoning sacrifice, or sin finding us out either in time or eternity.

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1080

THE text leads us to consider the consequences of a single sin, such as a breach of their engagement would have been to the Reubenites and Gadites.

I. It is natural to reflect on the probable influence upon us of sins committed in our childhood and even infancy, which we never realised or have altogether forgotten. Children's minds are impressible in a very singular way, such as is not common afterwards. The passing occurrences which meet them rest upon their imagination as if they had duration, and days or hours, having to them the semblance, may do the work, of years.

II. What is true in infancy and childhood is in its degree true in after-life. At particular moments in our later life, when the mind is excited, thrown out of its ordinary state, as if into the original unformed state when it was more free to choose good or evil, then, in like manner, it takes impressions, and those indelible ones, after the manner of childhood. This is one reason why a time of trial is often such a crisis in a man's spiritual history.

III. To these single or forgotten sins are not improbably to be traced the strange inconsistencies of character which we often witness in our experience of life.

IV. Single sins indulged or neglected are often the cause of other defects of character, which seem to have no connection with them, but which, after all, are rather symptomatic of the former than themselves at the bottom of the mischief.

V. A man may be very religious in all but one infirmity, and this one indulged infirmity may produce most disastrous effects on his spiritual state, without his ever being aware of it. His religious excellencies are of no avail against wilful sin. The word of Scripture assures us that such sin shuts us out from God's presence and obstructs the channels by which He gives us grace.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 37; also *Selection from the same*, p. 331.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 23.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 43; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 120; J. Wells, *Bible Echoes*, p. 79; R. Newton, *Bible Warnings: Addresses to Children*, p. 138; C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 52; T. Hammond, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 333; G. Litting, *Thirty Children's Sermons*, p. 34; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1916; R. C. Trench, *Brief Thoughts and Meditations*, p. 1. xxxii. 38.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 64. xxxiii. 1-49.—*Ibid.*, p. 24. xxxiii. 50-56.—*Ibid.*, p. 32. xxxiv. 1-12.—*Ibid.*, p. 41. xxxv. 33.—A. Lindesie, *The Gospel of Grace*, p. 11. Deut. i. 6.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 69. Deut. i. 19.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 76.

DEUTERONOMY.

Chap. i., ver. 31.—"And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place."

THESE words are part of a discourse delivered by Moses to all Israel, in the plain over against the Red Sea. Some of the most tender Divine utterances are to be found in the books of Moses. As we find flowers skirting the ice and frost of the Alpine glaciers, so in these books we find encouragements surrounding commandments and great promises sanctioning strong precepts.

The subject of the text is the paternal upholding of God.

I. Glance first at what we may call our history. There is a history appertaining to each of us, a story of our life. It has been written, though not with a pen, and it is inscribed on the mind of God. There is no story that we should read so often as our own. We study the biographies of others, and neglect the story of our own lives.

II. The next thing is, *God in our history.* The chief agents in our history are God and ourselves. From no portion of the story of life can we exclude God. His purpose, and thought, and will are in each part and in the whole. Every step that we take works out some part of the plan of life which He has laid down for us; so that God is in our history, in a certain sense, far more than we ourselves are in it.

III. Our history shows God's upholding of us. God bears thee when thou seemest to thyself to walk alone. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

IV. The Divine upholding is paternal. "The Lord thy God doth bear thee as a man doth bear his son," but much more wisely, more lovingly, more patiently, more paternally.

V. There are obligations and duties which spring from these truths. (1) If God thus bears us, we should "be quiet from fear of evil;" (2) we should be careful for nothing; (3) we should lovingly trust Him.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 5th series, No. xxiv.

REFERENCES: i. 32.—Parker, vol. v., p. 1. i. 38.—J. S. Howson, *Good*

Words, 1868, p. 490; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 537; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 263. i. 39.—Parker, vol. v., p. 1. i.-xxx. —W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 408; J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 321. ii. 7.—J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 17; A. Raleigh, *Thoughts for the Weary*, p. 46 (see also *Good Words*, 1877, p. 430); G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 173; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1179. ii. 36.—Parker, vol. v., p. 2. ii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 83. iii. 23-27.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 3rd series, p. 181. iii. 24.—Parker, vol. v., p. 2.

Chap. iii., ver. 25.—"I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."

I. It was a *land*, a good land, which Moses looked upon; it was a land of promise which God had prepared. Canaan was, in a sense, the heaven of Israel's hope: the more heaven-like, perhaps, because it was so fair a feature of our world, because it was a land on which a foot could be firmly and joyfully planted—a home in which a man and family, a nation, could nobly dwell. St. Peter speaks of "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." St. Peter and St. John looked for a scene which should be familiar, however transfigured, a scene which should keep its home-like character, however transformed.

II. The images which are employed by the sacred writers as most expressive when they are treating of heaven are all borrowed from the higher forms of the development of man's social and national life. This means that the human interests and associations prolong themselves in their integrity through death, and constitute the highest sphere of interest and activity in the eternal world. A home, a city, a country, a kingdom—these are the images; on the working out of these ideas the writers of the Scriptures spend all their force.

III. That good land beyond Jordan had some heaven-like feature herein: it was to be the theatre of the highest and holiest human association, under conditions most favourable to the most perfect development, and in an atmosphere of life which God's benediction should make an atmosphere of bliss.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 361.

References: iii. 25, 26.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 299. iii. 27-29.—Parker, vol. v., p. 3. iii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 90. iv. 1-23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 212. iv. 2.—H. L. Mansel, *Bampton Lectures*, 1858, p. 1. iv. 5-9.—J. Sherman, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1901. iv. 6.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii. p. 273.

Chap. iv., ver. 9.—"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life."

In the business of life there are three parties concerned, three parties of whose existence it behoves us to be equally and intensely conscious. These three are God on the one hand, and our own individual souls on the other, and the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, who alone can join the two into one.

I. There is all the difference in the world between saying, Bear yourselves in mind, and saying, Bear in mind always the three, God and Christ and yourselves, whom Christ unites to God. For then there is no risk of selfishness, nor of idolatry, whether of ourselves or of anything else; we do but desire to keep alive and vigorous, not any false or evil life in us, but our true and most precious life, the life of God in and through His Son. But what we see happen very often is just the opposite to this. The life in ourselves, of which we are keenly conscious, never for an instant forgetting it, is but the life of our appetites and passions, and this life is quite distinct from God and from Christ. But while this life is very vigorous, our better life slumbers; we have our own desires, and they are evil, but we take our neighbour's knowledge and faith and call them our own, and we live and believe according to our neighbour's notions; so our nobler life shrinks up to nothing, and our sense of truth perishes from want of exercise.

II. In combining a keen sense of our own soul's life with the sense of God and of Christ, there is no room for pride or presumption, but the very contrary. We hold our knowledge and our faith but as God's gifts, and are sure of them only so far as His power, and wisdom, and goodness are our warrant. Our knowledge, in fact, is but faith; we have no grounds for knowing as of ourselves, but great grounds for believing that God's appointed evidence is true, and that in believing it we are trusting Him.

T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 297.

References: iv. 12, 13.—S. Leathes, *Foundations of Morality*, p. 26. iv. 20.—Parker, vol. v., p. 4.

Chap. iv., vers. 21, 22.—"Furthermore the Lord was angry with me for your sakes," etc.

We cannot consider this solemn, mysterious close of the great prophet's life without feeling that there are lessons of instruction the most manifold which are presented by it.

Notice: I. A life may appear in some leading point of it to have been a failure, to have been defeated of that crowning success which in our short-sighted vision it had almost a right to claim, and may for all this have been a life most acceptable to God, and consummated with a death very precious in His sight. The lives of few men are rounded and complete; there is something wanting, something fragmentary, in almost all, and this quite as much in the lives of God's saints as in the lives of other men. God writes His sentence of vanity upon *all* things here.

II. We see here an example of the strictness with which God will call even His own to account, and while His judgments are in all the world, will cause them to begin at His own house. Moses' sin seems to us to have been a comparatively small one, a momentary outbreak of impatience or unbelief, and yet it entailed this penalty upon him, this baffling of the dearest hopes of his life.

III. We are wont to regard the death of Moses as something unlike the deaths of other men, and so in a sense it was. Yet look at it in another point of view, and what was it but the solitude of every deathbed? "Je mourrai seul," said the great Pascal, and the words are true of every man. We may live with others, but we must die by ourselves.

IV. Observe and admire the way in which God so often overrules the lives of the saints of the elder covenant that by them He may, in type and shadow, set forth to us the eternal verities of the Gospel. Think not of Moses that he can ever be more than a schoolmaster to Christ; that he can bring thee a foot further than to the borders of the land of thine inheritance. Another must lead thee in, if ever that good land shall be thine. Jesus, our Joshua, our Saviour—He must do this.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 238 (see also *Sermons New and Old*, p. 152).

REFERENCES: iv. 21, 22.—J. A. Sellar, *Church Doctrine and Practice*, p. 287. iv. 22.—Parker, vol. v., p. 5. iv. 29.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 43; Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, May 7th, 1885. iv. 29-31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1283. iv. 36.—Parker, *Fountain*, March 8th, 1877.

Chap. iv., vers. 39, 40.—"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else," etc.

MOSES promised the Jews that if they trusted in God, they would be a strong, happy, and prosperous people. On the

other hand, he warned them that if they forgot the Lord their God, poverty, misery, and ruin would surely fall upon them.

That this last was no empty threat is proved by the plain facts of the sacred history. For they did forget God, and worshipped Baalim, the sun, moon, and stars; and ruin of every kind did come upon them, till they were carried away captive to Babylon.

I. The thought that the God whom they worshipped was the one true God must have made His worship a very different, a much holier and deeper, matter to the Jews than the miserable, selfish thing which is miscalled religion by too many people nowadays, by which a man hopes to creep out of this world into heaven all by himself, without any real care or love for his fellow-creatures or those he leaves behind him.

An old Jew's faith in God and obedience to God was part of his family life, part of his politics, part of his patriotism. The duty he owed to God was not merely a duty which he owed his own conscience or his own soul; it was a duty which he owed to his family, to his kindred, to his country. It was not merely an opinion that there was one God, and not two; it was a belief that the one and only true God was protecting him, teaching him, inspiring him and all his nation.

II. God's purpose has come to pass. The little nation of the Jews, without seaport towns and commerce, without colonies or conquests, has taught the whole civilised world, has influenced all the good and all the wise unto this day so enormously, that the world has actually gone beyond them and become Christian by fully understanding their teaching and their Bible, while they have remained mere Jews by not understanding it. God's revelation to the Jews was His boundless message, and not any narrow message of man's invention.

C. KINGSLEY, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 184.

REFERENCES: iv. 32-40.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 118. iv. 39.—*Ibid.*, p. 126; C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 222. iv. 40.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 220. iv. 41, 42.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 305. iv.—Parker, vol. iv., pp. 97, 104. v. 1-21.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 214. v. 3.—Parker, vol. v., p. 5. v. 6, 7.—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 19. v. 8-10.—*Ibid.*, p. 53. v. 11.—*Ibid.*, p. 71. v. 12.—*Ibid.*: *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 45. v. 12-15.—R. Lee, *Sermons*, pp. 399, 411, 421; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 87; S. Leathes, *Foundations of Morality*, p. 128. v. 13, 14.—A. C. Tait, *Lessons for School Life*, p. 258.

Chap. v., ver. 16.—"Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

We find throughout the law that this commandment was put forth as the great foundation on which others were built. On him "that setteth light by his father or his mother" was one of the curses pronounced on Mount Ebal; and it was commanded, "He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."

I. The keeping of this commandment implies and produces a certain temper of mind which we call meekness. So far as anything like peace can be obtained in this world, it can only be obtained by keeping this commandment, by obedience, obedience to God; and this cannot be shown but by obedience to those whom He has set over us.

II. The temper of obedience being, therefore, the very foundation of all true piety, God has so appointed it that men should be all their lives in conditions of life to exercise and practise this habit of mind, first of all as children under parents, then as servants under masters, as subjects under kings, as all under spiritual pastors, and spiritual pastors under their superiors.

III. It is in this temper of meekness, above all, that Christ has set Himself before us as our Pattern. Christ was willingly subject to a poor carpenter in an obscure village, so much so as even to have worked with him, it is supposed, at his trade. He, alone without sin, was subject to sinful parents.

IV. The more difficult it is for children to pay this honour and obedience to parents who may be unworthy, the more sure they may be that it is the narrow way to life and the strait and difficult gate by which they must enter. True love will cover and turn away its eyes from sins and infirmities. For this reason there is a blessing even unto this day on the children of Shem and Japheth, and a curse on the descendants of Ham.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. ix., p. 277.

References: **v. 16.**—J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 105. v. 17-21.—*Ibid.*, pp. 123, 139, 155, 171, 189. v. 22.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 49; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 1. v. 24.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 201. v. 24-26.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 203. v. 29.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *A Course of Sermons for the Christian Year*, p. 209. v. 31.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 182.

Chap. v., ver. 33.—"Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

I. One of these clauses is commonly said to enjoin a duty, the other to promise the blessings which those might confidently look for who performed it. This is not a satisfactory definition. Moses teaches his countrymen that God *has* conferred upon them the highest prize which man can conceive, freely and without any merit on their part. Was the knowledge of the living and unseen God nothing in itself, but only valuable in virtue of some results that were to come of it? Moses tells his countrymen that it was everything. To hold it fast was to be a nation; to lose it was to sink back into that condition out of which they had been raised.

II. Is there no duty then assigned in the text? Certainly when it is said, "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you," it must be meant that there is something required on the part of the creature as well as something bestowed by the Creator. We cannot understand what is required unless we understand what is bestowed. If we believe that a way has been made for us, and that we have been put in that way, we can apprehend the force of the precept to walk in it, we can feel what is meant by transgression and revolt.

III. It is here signified in very simple, clear language that a people in a right, orderly, godly state shall be a well-doing people, a people with all the signs and tokens of strength, growth, triumph, a people marked for permanence and indefinite expansion.

IV. It cannot be true that the blessings of adversity were unknown to the Jews, were reserved for a later period. The more strong their feeling was that God had chosen their nation and made a covenant with it, the greater was their struggle with their individual selfishness, their desire of great things for themselves, the more need had they of God's fires to purify them. No men could be more taught than the Jewish seers were that punishments are necessary for individuals and nations, and that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

V. It is a perilous and an almost fatal notion that Christian men have less to do with the present than the Jews had, that their minds and their religion are to be projected into a region after death, because there only the Divine Presence is dwelling.

The alternative is between a faith which shall belong to men as men, which shall concern all their ordinary pursuits, toils, relations—the alternative is between such a faith and absolute atheism.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 241.

REFERENCES: vi. 1-12.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 136. vi. 1-25.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 217.

Chap. vi., ver. 4 (with Matt. xxviii. 19).—"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

OBSERVE: I. That the Scriptural Trinity implies that God is One. So far from being against the cardinal truth of God's unity, it actually assumes it. The Trinity of our faith means a distinction of persons within one common indivisible Divine nature. If we ask, What is the chief spiritual benefit which we derive from the knowledge of the unity of God? the answer is this: The unity of God is the only religious basis for a moral law of perfect and unwavering righteousness. It is a unity of moral character in the Ruler, and therefore of moral rule in the universe. It is such a unity as excludes all conflict within the Divine will, all inconsistency in the Divine law, all feebleness in the Divine administration.

II. What religious advantages do we reap from the fresh Christian discovery of a Trinity within this unity of the Divine nature? (1) To this question we answer, that the doctrine of the Trinity has heightened and enriched our conception of the nature of God. (2) This doctrine affords a basis for those gracious relations which it has pleased God to sustain towards us in the economy of our salvation.

J. OSWALD DYKES, *Sermons*, p. 123.

I. THE belief in one God gives rest to the active man; it satisfies his intellectual, his moral, his emotional, his spiritual, being.

II. In the field of scientific research this faith inspires us with a confident hope of reducing all phenomena to law, since all proceed from one hand, and express one creative will. This faith supplies that which physical science lacks and yet requires, viz., a prime mover and a sustaining power.

III. In morals this faith acts most powerfully upon our will and rouses us to exalt the higher nature and repress the lower. Polytheism deifies the human passions, and turns the worst

views into acts of religion; but if there be only one God, then our highest aspirations must give us the truest image of Him.

IV. Faith in one God brings peace to the mourner and to the suffering, for we know that He who now sends the trouble is the same God whose kindness we have felt so often. Having learned to love and trust Him, we are able to accept suffering as the chastisement of a Father's hand. If there were gods many, we could regard the troubles of life only as the spiteful acts of some malevolent deity; we must bribe his fellow-gods to oppose him.

V. Upon one God we are able to concentrate all the powers of the soul, our emotions are not dissipated, our religious efforts are not frittered away upon a pleasing variety of characters, but the image of God is steadily renewed in the soul, and communion with God grows ever closer.

F. R. CHAPMAN, *The Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Jan. 22nd, 1880.

THE teaching of the text is that the "one God" must be "loved" and served by the whole man. Consider how the love of God is to be cultivated.

I. We cannot love an abstraction. God must be a personal God before we can love Him. We must have a sense of property in Him. He must be our own God.

II. *Presence* is essential to love, even in human love. If we have not a presence in fact, we always make it in fancy. There is an imaginary presence of the person we love always with us. God says, "My presence shall go with thee."

III. There must be prayer. Communion with the absent whom we love is essential to the existence and the growth of love.

IV. God is really a present God. Therefore we must do acts—acts which have Him in them. Acts of love make love.

V. There is no love like union—wedded union. And so through this mystery of union the love grows fond, intense, eternal. Our whole being gathers itself up to one focus, and the demand of the text becomes possible, and the duty becomes a necessity.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 10th series, p. 6.

REFERENCES: F.W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 261; J. Oswald Dykes, *The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 35; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 271. vi. 6, 7.—E. M. Goulburn, *Gospel of the Childhood*,

p. 31. vi. 7.—R. W. Evans, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 21. vi. 16.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 205; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2178. vi. 20-25.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 145.

Chap. vi., ver. 24.—"And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."

I. Let us examine the popular idea as to the excessive severity and formality of this law. To a transgressor who had not in him the living principle of obedience it was, no doubt, fearfully formal and stern. So is our statute-book to a felon, while on you and me it sits lightly as the air. Judaism was given from Sinai to that people for that people's good. It was God's best gift to them as they stood there before the mountain. Its relation to the future was their relation to the future; in training, educating, and developing them, it was making a future possible to their nation and to the world.

II. Notice that the very heart's core of a dispensation of law is duty, and duty is the master-key to life. Law is the buttress of right; its object is to fortify the dutiful soul. The real object of law is to help men to do right, and thus most effectually restrain from wrong; unless there be a sentiment of duty latent which the law can appeal to and elicit, it is heartless and hopeless work.

III. The receiving of a law was the first step of the people in a new and glorious career of personal and national development, which, though they have missed the crown, has left them the most notable, powerful, and capable race in the world. In other words, it opened a noble man's career to them; it will open the same to you.

IV. But, however we may magnify it, and however justly, the law is not a gospel, and can in no wise supply the place of a gospel to the world. The dispensation of law in our individual histories is but a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The Gospel is the instrument of the reconciliation which the law declares to be needful, but cannot secure.

J Baldwin Brown, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 202.

References: vi. 24.—A. W. Hare, *Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 367. vii. 2-4.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 24. vii. 6.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 192. vii. 8.—Parker, vol. v., p. 6. vii. 9.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 165; Parker, vol. v., p. 7. vii. 9, 10.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 21. vii. 12, 13.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Easter to Ascension Day*, p. 375. vii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., p. 673.

Chap. vii., ver. 21.—"Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible."

I. The complaint has been made often that the qualities which Christians are especially encouraged to cultivate are not manliness and courage; that, so far as the Christian ideal is set continually and steadily before the mind of a nation or a man, that mind is likely to become submissive, not energetic. I believe that the courage, which is only another way of expressing the heart, of a nation is liable to a continual weakening and decay; that left to itself it will certainly wither; that some religions may hasten its death; but that by doing so such religion will prove that it does not come from God, that it is not His religion, not His instrument for reforming and regenerating the world.

II. A return to the old faith that courage and humanity are not enemies, but inseparable companions, has certainly commenced among us. The misfortune is that Christianity is supposed to be not identical with humanity, but a substitution for it. And this opinion is closely connected with another: that courage is a heathen, or perhaps the heathen, virtue, and that we have cherished it by giving our children a semi-heathen education. Consider this opinion under different aspects.

III. By a heathen we mean one who is not a Jew. That is the simplest, most accurate use of the name. Taking it in this sense, our text is decisive that a high estimate of courage was not confined to heathens; that if to form such an estimate is ungodly, the chosen people were as ungodly as any. The Bible tells us that idolatry is the great destroyer of courage, reverence for the true God and an abiding sense of His presence and protection the upholder of it.

Now is this doctrine compatible with the fact that the most illustrious of the heathen nations were singularly brave nations, and that our forefathers sought to kindle English courage at their fires?

It is incompatible if we regard a heathen *merely* as an idolater. It is perfectly compatible if we trace through the history of the great nations that worshipped idols a continual witness against it. Their belief in courage, as a quality which raised them above the animals, was the greatest of all the protests which the conscience of heathens was bearing against idolatry, against the worship of visible things, which is directly connected with our animal instincts, which is always lowering the human being to the level of that which he should rule.

IV. The courage of the Hebrew was derived from his trust in

the Being who had chosen him to do his work in the world, who would accomplish that work, let what powers would unite to defeat it. Christianity is not a denial of Judaism or a denial of heathenism, a *tertium quid* which excludes all that is strongest and most vital in both, but the harmony and concentration of both, the discovery of Him in whom the meaning of both is realised and raised to its highest power; but out of the union and reconciliation of apparent opposites in the faith of a Father and a Son, of a Spirit proceeding from both, to quicken men and make them the voluntary, cheerful servants, because the sons, of God, there must come forth a courage Diviner than the Hebrew, more human than the Greek, more pledged to a continual battle with disorder than the Roman.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 145.

Chap. vii., vers. 22-26.—"And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little," etc.

I. THERE can be no doubt that these passages represent the Jewish nation as bound to a perpetual conflict with idolatry. The resistance was primarily an internal one. The members of the nation were never to bow down to natural or human symbols. But they were not merely to be tenacious of the true worship and watchful against the false; they were to go forth against the idolatrous people of Canaan, to break in pieces their gods, to destroy their altars and high places. And not only the idol or the idol temple was to be destroyed; the inhabitants of the idolatrous country, their wives, their children, their sheep, and their oxen, were to be put to death.

In explaining these facts, we must remember that the Jews were the *one* nation that might not go out *to win* prizes for themselves; they were simply the instruments of the righteous Lord against those who were polluting His earth and rendering it unfit for habitation.

II. We have surely not learned from the Sermon on the Mount that there is not a righteous Being, One whose will is to all good, One to whom injustice and wrong are opposed. Neither did our Lord say that men were not to be the instruments in doing God's work, in carrying out His purposes. The Gospel must be quite as assertive and intrusive as Judaism. Idolatry was more directly assaulted in its high places, received more deadly wounds, in the three centuries during which the Gospel of the Son of God was opposed by all the swords of the Roman empire, and when it had no earthly sword of its own,

than by all the battles of the Israelites. The punishment of the idolater is not now the most effectual means of extinguishing idolatry. Our Lord shows us that the proclamation of Himself is a more perfect one.

III. These distinctions are deep and radical; they must affect all the relations between the magistrate and the herald of the Gospel, between the nation and the Church.

If we have learned to believe that the spirit of love is a consuming fire, which must destroy the idols and high places that we ourselves have set up and then all those which are withdrawing men anywhere from the living and true God, we shall find that the command to drive out the debased people of Canaan is an utterance of the same gracious will which bade the disciples go into all lands and preach the Gospel to every creature.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 256.

REFERENCE: vii. 22-26.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 152.

Chap. viii., ver. 2.—"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

I. THE remembrance of the way. There will be (1) the remembrance of favour, and by consequence of joy. (2) There will be the remembrance of sin, and by consequence of sin the remembrance of sorrow.

II. Notice the purposes of Divine providence in the journey. (1) The first purpose is to induce humility. (2) The second purpose is to prove us. (3) The third purpose is to know what is in our heart.

III. If you have thus travelled in the way, there will be many uses of the memory. You will know more of God at the conclusion of your journey than you did at the commencement. You will behold both the goodness and the severity of God: the severity which punishes sin wherever it is to be found; the goodness which itself provides a Substitute and finds a Saviour.

W. MORLEY PUNSHON, *Three Popular Discourses*, No. 1.

Chap. viii., ver. 2.—"These forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee."

THE intention of "the way in the wilderness" is twofold: humiliation and probation.

I. All things are humbling. A much shorter period than forty years will be enough to make every one feel the deep humiliation

of life. (1) It is a very humbling thing to receive kindness. (2) There are very humbling sorrows: sickness and bereavement; nothing can be more humiliating than these. (3) Sin is the great abaser. Failure is marked upon a thousand things. No thought is more humbling to the Christian man than the remembrance of his sins.

II. With humiliation is probation. "To humble thee, and *to prove thee*." It was God's plan when He made this world to make it a probationary world. Probation is God's putting a man to the test to see whether He loves Him, and how much he loves Him. That which is a temptation on the part of Satan for the malevolence with which he uses it is a probation on God's part for the love wherewith He permits it. God always proves His child, and the more He gives him, the more He proves him. Whenever He bestows a grace, He puts that grace to the test.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 156.

(1) EMPHASISE the word *all*, for on that word the emphasis of the sentence truly lies. (2) Consider that it *is* a way. The character of the path is to be estimated, not by present difficulty or danger, but by the importance of the end. (3) Consider the infinite variety of the way. (4) Consider the beauty of the way. (5) Consider the bread of the wilderness. The miracle of the manna is repeated every day before our eyes. (6) Remember the perils of the wilderness. (7) Remember the sins of the wilderness. (8) Remember the chastisements of the wilderness. (9) Remember the Elims of the way. (10) Consider the end of the way.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 371.

THERE are two main considerations suggested by this passage.

I. What we should be chiefly occupied with as we look back. (1) Let memory work under the distinct recognition of Divine guidance in every part of the past. (2) We are to judge of the things that we remember by their tendency to make character, to make us humble, to reveal us to ourselves, and to knit us in glad obedience to our Father God.

II. Turn now to the other consideration which may help to make remembrance a good, viz., the issues to which our retrospect must tend if it is to be anything more than sentimental recollection. (1) Let us remember and be thankful. (2) Let us remember and let the memory lead to contrition.

(3) Let us remember in order that from the retrospect we may get practical wisdom. (4) Let us remember that we may hope.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 151.

REFERENCES: viii. 2.—*Congregationalist*, vol. vii., p. 530; T. Binney, *Weighhouse Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 13; T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 309.

Chap. viii., vers. 2-4.

I. THE text shows us what God did with Israel. (1) He sent them back to wander in the desert through forty years, sent them back from entering the land which He eventually intended to give them. We see only brief time before us as our day in which to work. God does not hasten, for eternity is before Him as His working day. (2) God exposed His people to much difficulty and hardship, but He did not suffer them to sink under their troubles. They were long kept from Canaan, but God did not forsake His people.

II. What did God mean by dealing thus with Israel? (1) He treated them in this way to humble them. (2) He dealt with them thus to show them what material they were made of. (3) He wished to show them further what He could do. (4) His end in His dealings with Israel was instruction and correction, and all the spiritual advantages to be derived from it.

III. Notice what God requires in respect of that instruction and correction. "Thou shalt remember." What a mighty effect memory has upon life! Through the power of memory man finds in the past and present one continuous life. Remember the way the Lord hath led *thee*. Every man has a way to himself, and every man of God sees God choosing that way, and leading him in that way.

S. MARTIN, *The Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 4th series, No. ix.

Chap. viii., vers. 2-5.

THIS is the lesson of our lives. This is God's training, not only for the Jews, but for us. We read these verses to teach us that God's ways with man do not change; that His fatherly hand is over us, as well as over the people of Israel; that their blessings are our blessings, their dangers are our dangers; that, as St. Paul says, all these things are written for our example.

I. "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger." How true to life that is; how often there comes to a man, at his

setting out in life, a time which humbles him, when his fine plans fail him, and he has to go through a time of want and struggle. His very want, and struggles, and anxiety may be God's help to him. If he be earnest and honest, patient and God-fearing, he prospers; God brings him through. God holds him up, strengthens and refreshes him, and so the man learns that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

II. There is another danger which awaits us, as it awaited those old Jews: the danger of prosperity in old age. It is easy for a man who has fought the battle with the world, and conquered more or less, to say in his heart, as Moses feared that those old Jews would say, "My might and the power of my wit hath gotten me this wealth," and to forget the Lord his God, who guided him and trained him through all the struggles and storms of early life, and so to become vainly confident, worldly and hard-hearted, undevoted and ungodly, even though he may keep himself respectable enough, and fall into no open sin.

III. Old age itself is a most wholesome and blessed medicine for the soul of man. Anything is good which humbles us, makes us feel our own ignorance, weakness, nothingness, and cast ourselves on that God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and on the mercy of that Saviour who died for us on the Cross, and on that Spirit of God from whose holy inspiration alone all good desires and good actions come.

C. KINGSLEY, *Discipline, and Other Sermons*, p. 40.

Chap. viii., ver. 3.—"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

IF this text be true, what a strange comment on it is the world at the present hour! Turn to whatever class of our countrymen you like, and in every accent of their voices you will hear uttered their practical belief that they can live by bread alone. It is for bread—that is, for material things—that men toil, and strive, and exhaust their finest energies. Now, if ever, it is needful to thunder in the ears of our countrymen, "Man shall not live by bread alone." And as statesmen, and philosophers, and priests behold these things, each comes forward with his Gospel for mankind.

I. We have the "Gospel of education:" Let us take care that each child learns the elementary principles of knowledge, and we must hope that the coming generation shall have a higher form of national and social life. Education is good, but

if men look to it as a panacea for the evils around them, they will assuredly one day find out their terrible mistake. Man doth not live by the fruits of the tree of knowledge alone.

II. We have then the message of the philosophers: Let us eat of the tree of science and live for ever. But science is not the bread for sorrowing, sinning humanity. This is not the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

III. The only power that can win souls from their selfishness and sin is the preaching of a personal, crucified Christ; the Incarnate Word of God is still and ever the bread by which nations and men must live. It was not a new science, it was not an improved philosophy, it was not the idyllic life of a Galilean peasant, that men preached in the early days, in the purple dawn, of Christianity, and by the preaching of it shook the empire and revolutionised the world. And it is not by a vague, "accommodating theology," with no doctrinal articulation—which, polype-like, floats on the tides of human thought, rising as they rise, falling as they fall,—that men and nations can be saved now. It is as of old—by the preaching of the Word, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. "*I* am the Bread of life," said Christ.

I. Teignmouth Shore, *The Life of the World to Come*, p. 39.

References: viii. 3.—A. Macleod, *The Gentle Heart*, p. 211; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 418. viii. 3-6.—*Ibid.*, vol. xvi., No. 939; Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, June 4th, 1885.

Chap. viii., vers. 11-18.—"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day."

In the text we have Moses' answer to the first great question in politics: What makes a nation prosperous?

To that wise men have always answered, as Moses answered, "Good government is government according to the laws of God." That alone makes a nation prosperous. But the multitude, who are not wise men, give a different answer. They say, "What makes a nation prosperous is its wealth."

I. Moses does not deny that wealth is a good thing. He takes for granted that the Jews will grow very rich, but he warns them that their riches, like all other earthly things, may be a curse or a blessing to them. When riches multiplied, they might forget God, and say, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth."

II. God gives power to get wealth in two ways: (1) He

gives the raw material; (2) He gives the wit to use it. Moses bade the people remember that they owed all to God. What they had, they had of God's free gift. What they were, they were of God's free grace. Therefore they were not to boast of themselves, their numbers, their wealth, their armies, their fair and fertile land. They were to make their boast of God, of God's goodness.

III. If we as a nation go on trusting in ourselves rather than God; if we keep within us the hard, self-sufficient spirit, and boast to ourselves, "My power and the strength of my hands have got me this and that," and, in fact, live under the notion, which too many have, that we could do very well without God's help if God would let us alone—then we are heaping up ruin and shame for ourselves, and for our children after us. In this sense God is indeed a jealous God, who will not give His honour to another, but will punish those who trust in anything except Himself.

C. KINGSLEY, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 197.

REFERENCES: viii. 15.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. ii., p. 336. viii. 16.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 168. viii. 18.—*Ibid.*, p. 188; *Hidden Springs*, p. 254. viii. 19.—W. J. Butler, *Sermons for Working Men*, p. 353. viii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 160.

Chap. ix., ver. 1.—"Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day," etc.

I. ALTHOUGH God be not far from every one of us, yet many of us have no consciousness of His presence; for a large portion of our lives we do not think of Him, and when we do it is rather an uncertain feeling after Him amidst thick darkness than the seeing Him in the clear light revealed in and by His Son Jesus Christ. And these two states, the seeing God constantly in Christ and the not so seeing Him, are the great and eternal differences which will divide all of us from one another, the differences which will make and do make our lives holy or unholy, which will make our deaths blessed or cursed.

II. It is quite true that many who live without thinking of God do yet intend to keep, and do keep actually, many of God's laws. It is precisely because there can be, and is up to a certain point, good without God, because men feel that even without a lively sense of God Himself they can love His moral works, as they can love His natural works, that therefore they are blind themselves, and we too often are blind for them, to their infinite

danger; they speak peace to themselves, and we echo the word till the true peace is hidden from them for ever.

III. What strength amidst weakness, what decision amidst endless wavering, what joy in life, what hope in death, are to be found in this consciousness of God in Christ! It is the life of Christ's people, the life of the children of God.

T. ARNOLD, *Christian Life: Sermons*, vol. v., p. 305.

REFERENCES: ix. 1.—Parker, vol. v., p. 7. ix. 4, 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 222.

Chap. ix., ver. 6.—"Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people."

I. THE address of Moses is very different from the addresses of most captains of armies under similar circumstances. (1) He makes no attempt to underrate the power of the enemies with whom the Israelites had to contend. He begins his address by telling the people that they are that day to pass over Jordan, to go in and possess nations greater and mightier than themselves. The reason for his giving such information was that the design of God was not merely to conquer the Canaanites, but to educate Israel, to teach them that by God's power weakness may be made strength and the mighty vanquished by the feeble. (2) Moses assures the people in plain language that no righteousness of theirs had gained them the land. They might be ready enough to admit that it was not their own courage or their own bodily strength, but they might still be disposed to think that they had deserved God's favour, that if they had not been deserving of the victory, God would not have given it to them. Self-flattery is easy, and therefore Moses very wisely and decidedly protested once for all against such a view of God's doings.

II. The principle of spiritual life with ourselves is precisely that which Moses laid down as the principle of national life for the Israelites. God gives us the land of promise for no righteousness of our own. Everything depends on God's mercy, God's will, God's purpose; the certainty of victory depends, not upon any feelings, or experiences, or conflicts of ours, but upon the ever-present help of the almighty God.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 78.

REFERENCES: ix. 18, 19.—J. D. Coleridge, *Sermons for Sundays, Festivals and Fasts*, edited by A. Watson, 1st series, p. 40; Parker, vol. v., p. 8.

Chap. ix., vers. 26-29.—"I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand," etc.

THIS prayer brings out in its greatest strength a contrast which goes through the Book of Deuteronomy, and through the whole Bible. The Israelites are the people of God, His inheritance redeemed by His mighty hand. They are stubborn, stiff-necked, wicked. We become so familiar with passages which contain both these descriptions of them, that we attach little meaning to either.

In seeking for a resolution of this difficulty we notice:

I. That the Scriptures do not set forth the history of a man seeking for God, but of God seeking for men. To separate Moses the righteous man from Moses the deliverer of the Israelites is impossible. He could not have been righteous if he had not fulfilled that task; he could not have been righteous if he had not testified in all his acts and words that God, not he, was the Deliverer. If we once see upon what ground the holiness of Moses stood, we must admit that the nation of which he was a member was holy in precisely the same sense and for precisely the same reason as he was; nay, that it had a title prior to his, a title from which his own was derived. It was a holy nation because God had called it out, had chosen it to be His; He had put His name upon it.

II. See then how reasonable was the prayer of the text. Because Moses regarded the Israelites as a holy and chosen people, redeemed by God's own hand, because he believed that this description belonged to the whole covenant people at all time, therefore he felt with intense anguish their stubbornness, their wickedness, and their sin. It was the forgetfulness of their holy state which he confessed with such shame and sorrow before God; it was because they had gone out of the right way, each man preferring a selfish way of his own, that they needed his intercession and God's renewing and restoring mercy.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 53.

REFERENCES: ix. 29.—Bishop Lightfoot, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 63. ix.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 195. x. 14-16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 303. x. 16.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 9 (see also Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Christmas and Epiphany*, p. 193); *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 12; Parker, vol. v., p. 8. x., xi.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 204. xi. 10-12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 58.

Chap. xi., vers. 11, 12.—"But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven," etc.

I. The Jew was to understand from his first entry into the land of Canaan that his prosperity depended utterly on God. The laws of weather, by which the rain comes up off the sea, were unknown to him. They are all but unknown to us now. But they were known to God. Not a drop could fall without His providence and will; therefore they were utterly in His power.

The warning of this text came true. More than once we read of drought, long, severe, and ruinous. In one famous case, there was no rain for three years, and Ahab had to go out to search through the land for a scrap of pasture. These droughts came at times when the Jews had fallen into idolatry and profligacy.

II. It is the intense faith in the living God which can come only by the inspiration of the Spirit of God which proves the Old Testament to be truly inspired. In later times the Jews had these words of Moses written on their foreheads, but not on their hearts. They had lost all faith in God; He had spoken to their fathers, but they could not believe that He was speaking to them, not even when He spoke by His only-begotten Son, the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. Wrapped up in their narrow, shallow book-divinity, they said, "This people who knoweth not the law is accursed." Nothing new could be true. It must be put down, persecuted down, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation. But they did not succeed. The Romans came after all and took away their place and nation, and so they failed, as all will fail, who will not believe in God. The truth which they think they have stifled will rise again, for Christ, who is the Truth, will raise it again, and it shall conquer, and leaven the hearts of men till all be leavened.

C. Kingsley, *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 210.

References: xi. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., p. 728. xi. 18.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2580. xi. 18-21.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 152.

Chap. xi., ver. 19.—"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up."

I. This is the simplest notion of education; for undoubtedly he is perfectly educated who is taught all the will of God con-

cerning him, and enabled through life to execute it. And he is not well educated who does not know the will of God, or, knowing it, has received no help in his education towards being inclined and enabled to do it.

II. The special thing meant to be taught to the Israelites was a knowledge of God's statutes and ordinances, not the Ten Commandments only, nor all the early history of their forefathers contained in the Book of Genesis, but God's law given to them His people, His will respecting them morally and politically, His will with regard to all the relations of private and public life; all this was laid down in their law; all this was carefully to be taught them in their youth, that so, in whatsoever line of life they might be thrown, or whatever questions might be agitated, they might know what was God's will, and therefore might know and do their own duty.

III. For the Israelites the Bible contained both the rule and its application; for us it contains only the rule. In order, therefore, to instruct our children fully in God's will and enable them to execute it, we must bring in some other knowledge and other studies, not to be found in the Bible, in order to make up for that part of the Bible which gave this instruction to the Israelites, but which gives it us no longer.

And hence it is clear that neither is the Bible alone sufficient to give a complete religious education, nor is it possible to teach history and moral and political philosophy with no reference to the Bible without giving an education that should be anti-religious. For in the one case the rule is given without the application; in the other the application is derived from a wrong rule.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 131.

Chap. xi., ver. 21.—"As the days of heaven upon the earth."

THE text shows us a Divine method in providence; a law for individual and national life, and for the larger life of the race; a law borne witness to by the history of the people whose history is a light for all time, and by which we have gleams through experience of bitter times, foretastes and earnests of the inheritance of light, periods filled with special mercy and truth, times of quickening and spiritual growth, days of heaven upon earth.

I. The first days of the Christian revelation were, in the highest and most absolute sense, days of heaven upon earth. And these days still return to us. Times of revival are simply repetitions on a smaller scale of the first days of the Church.

The old doctrines, the old familiar facts of the Gospel, are transfigured as Christ was. They rise, as He rose, from the dead, and again we behold the miracle of a nation being born in a day.

II. The times when the soul is open to the revelations and offers of Divine life are days of heaven upon earth. The dawns and sunsets of these days are in the soul itself. "Be not disobedient to the heavenly vision." While the light of it is shining walk in the light. It is the light which is the life both of God and man.

III. The coming of Christ into a life is the beginning of days of heaven for that life. That would be a day of heaven to Zaccheus when Christ said to him, "To-day I must abide at thy house." Suddenly, by Christ's visit, life changes for him, and the poor lorn, lost, hated Zaccheus has a song in his heart, and a heart resolute to be on God's side and do God's will.

IV. Times of service under Christ are days of heaven upon earth. The time spent in Christian service seems to expand, to become more capacious for enterprise, more filled with opportunity, until we come, in our experience of it, to have vivid conceptions of the state concerning which it is written, "There is no night there," and real gleams of days of heaven upon earth.

V. The beautiful days of earth are types and sometimes actual realisations of such days of heaven.

VI. Christ is the Light which makes days of heaven possible. And such days fail of their purpose if they fail to increase our joy in Him.

A. MACLEOD, *Days of Heaven upon Earth*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: xi. 21.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 326. xi. 26-32.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 212.

Chap. xii., vers. 8, 9.—"Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you."

MOSES warns the Israelites here in the text that it would be a great mistake if they supposed themselves more at their ease and liberty when they were in Canaan than when they were in the wilderness. He mentions it as one of the advantages of Canaan that they would there be able to live by a stricter and more exact rule than they could possibly do in the desert. In

the same way, our Saviour, inviting us to the blessings of the Gospel, describes them as a yoke and a burden, easy, indeed, and light, yet still a yoke and a burden.

I. We see, then, that both the law and the Gospel consider it a great blessing to be kept under strict rules. This way of thinking is by no means the way of the world. People in general like nothing so much as having their own choice in all things. We see this: (1) in the eagerness of children to get out of the state of childhood; (2) in our unwillingness to take advice, even from the wisest; (3) in our unwillingness to let God choose for us, and our impatience under the burdens He lays upon us.

II. To have this thought of being overruled and guided at every step firmly fixed within us will prove the greatest of all blessings both as to our *rest* in this world and our *inheritance* in that which is to come. It helps us greatly in the performance of our duty, because, in truth, it leaves us nothing else to do. It prepares and trains us for everlasting happiness in heaven. For the very secret of our enjoyment there will be that God's will shall be ours. It shows the high and noble uses to which we may turn all our worst disappointments. They are so many lessons in God's school, each intended to make us more perfect in that Divine art of having the same will that He has.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. ii., p. 104 (see also Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Ascension Day to Trinity Sunday*, p. 53).

REFERENCES: xii. 9.—Parker, vol. v., p. 9. xii. 10.—*Ibid.*, p. 10. xii.—*Ibid.*, p. 220.

Chap. xiii., vers. 1-3.—"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, . . . thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet," etc.

I. IF the text teaches us how the true Jewish prophet would speak to his people, and in what spirit they would hear him, it teaches us who read him how we are to receive his words. The real significance of prophecies is felt when they are viewed in connection with the course of the Divine government. The interpreter is not to be heard unless he speaks to us first of a present God, of One who is in covenant with us, as He was with our fathers, who is calling on us every hour to turn from our idols to Him. If this is not the substance of his teaching, if all his predictions do not flow out of it, he is not speaking in the

spirit of Scripture; for us, at all events, he is speaking falsely.

II. What I have said of prophecy applies also to miracles. The text does not separate them, nor can we. We turn to the signs and wonders in the New Testament, as in the Old, to prove that God was speaking them. Do we not rather need the assurance that God is speaking to explain the signs and wonders? If we try to ascend from the sign to God, do we really ever find Him? How meanly we think of the Gospel when we suppose that it cannot be presented at once to the hearts and consciences of sinful men, but must be ushered in with a long array of proofs which the great majority of people find it much harder to receive than that which is proved, nay, which I suspect they never do receive till they have first embraced that.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 274.

REFERENCE: xiii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 229.

Chap. xiv., ver. 21.—"Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."

I. THE simplest meaning of this inspired charge is the true one: Thou shalt not blunt thy natural feelings or those of others by disregarding the inward dictates of a Divine humanity. Human nature shrinks from the idea of using that which ought to be the food of a new-born animal to prepare that animal to be man's food, of applying the mother's milk to a purpose so opposite to that for which God destined it. Harden not thy heart against this instinct of tenderness and pity on the plea that it matters not to the slain animal in what way it is dressed, or that the living parent, void of reason, has no consciousness of the inhumanity; for thine own sake refrain from that which is hard-hearted and unfeeling, from that which, though it inflicts not pain, springs out of selfishness and indicates a spirit unworthy of man and forgetful of God.

II. The text seems to teach us most of all the wickedness of using for selfish or wrong purposes the sacred feelings of another; of availing ourselves of the knowledge of another's affections to make him miserable or to make him sinful; of trifling, in this sense, with the most delicate workings of the human mechanism, and turning to evil account that insight into character with which God has endowed us all, in different degrees, for purposes most opposite, purposes wholly beneficent, pure, and good.

III. Hardness of heart has two aspects: towards man and

towards God. Towards God it is brought about by acts of neglect, leading to habits of neglect. Towards man it is produced in us in a similar way: by repeated acts of disregard, leading to a habit of disregard, by blinding ourselves to others' feelings and saying and doing things that wound them, till at last we become unconscious of their very existence, and think nothing real which is not, in some manner, our own. Watch and pray against hardness of heart. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Memorials of Harrow Sundays*, p. 138.

REFERENCE: xv. 1-11.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 238.

Chap. xv., vers. 7, 8, 11.—"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother."

I. "GOD has made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell upon the face of the whole earth." This is the announcement of a grand fact, which has never yet been successfully disproved. This relates man to man everywhere, makes all the world a neighbourhood, and founds upon universal affinity a universal claim. This general law, however, must be divided into minor modifications, or it will be practically useless. Hence all private affections are recognised and hallowed, and are indeed the sources from which all public virtues spring. We are bound to love our neighbour as ourselves, and if in a contracted Hebrew spirit you are inclined to press the inquiry, "And who is my neighbour?" there comes a full pressure of utterance to authenticate and enforce the answer, *Man*.

II. The last clause of the text is as true to-day as in the time of its original utterance. The poor shall never cease out of the land; in every age and in every clime there are distinctions of society in the world. Society could not cohere as a union of equals; there must be graduation and dependence. In the text benevolence to the poor is positively enjoined, and enjoined because of their abiding existence as a class of the community. Once recognise the relationship, and the claim will inevitably follow; the sense of service rendered and obligation created thereby will make that claim more sacred; and Religion, attaching her holiest sanction, lifts the recognition of the claim into a duty which may not be violated without sin.

III. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye

did it unto Me." This is our Divinely furnished argument. "She hath done what she could." This is to be the measure of our giving.

W. MORLEY PUNSHON, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 25.

REFERENCES: xv. 9.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 512. xv. 11.—W. D. Morrice, *Sermons for Sundays: Festivals and Fasts*, 3rd series, p. 32. xv. 12-18.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 247. xv. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1406.

Chap. xvi., ver. 1 (with Neh. ix. 9-11).—"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God, for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

THE sacred Scriptures record two chief outbursts of miraculous power: one at the foundation of the Hebrew commonwealth at the exodus from Egypt and one at the time of Christ's appearing and the foundation of Christianity. It is a matter of infinite importance to every man to ascertain whether these great miracles of the Exodus and of Christ's first advent were really wrought.

I. The facts of the case are these: (1) The Hebrew people and the ancient Hebrew books now exist, and they throw light on one another. (2) Wherever the Jewish people exist they celebrate in the spring the festival of the Passover, which they universally regard as a historical memorial of the deliverance of their forefathers from Egypt, about fourteen hundred years before Christ, by the supernatural intervention of God the Almighty.

II. In the same manner, the feast of Pentecost, or the festival of the wheat-harvest, fifty days after the Passover, came to be regarded as a memorial of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai on the fiftieth day after the Exodus. In like manner, the autumnal festival of Succoth, or Booths, called "the feast of tabernacles," is now celebrated just as universally as the Passover in the spring, as a memorial of the children of Israel dwelling in huts or booths. These festivals and commemorations have been celebrated now for more than three thousand years.

III. The rule is that national celebrations and public monuments maintain the remembrance of real events in past ages. It may be objected that if Athens, with all its wisdom, could celebrate the fictitious history of Minerva, why may we not believe that the Jews were capable of commemorating things that happened only in the imagination of later writers and poets? To this we answer: (1) that even in the festivals of mythology

there has been a strange interweaving of historical truth and a constant tendency to give this element prominence in the lapse of time; (2) that the Jews were utterly destitute of the dramatic imagination of the Greeks: to them the origination of a myth like that of the Exodus, if it were a myth, would be an uncongenial exercise, its adoption as history an impossibility.

E. WHITE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 120.

REFERENCES: xvi. 10.—A. Pott, *Sermons for the Festivals and Fasts*, p. 375. xvi. 13.—C. J. Vaughan, *Good Words*, 1864, p. 700. xvi. 13-17.—J. Bruce, *Sermons*, p. 155; E H. Plumptre, *Church Sermons by Eminent Clergymen*, vol. ii., p. 244 (see also *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 51).

Chap. xvi., vers. 16.—"They shall not appear before the Lord empty."

I. A LEADING feature, *the* leading feature, of the Old Testament revelation, is that life and all that crowns it—its crown of blessings—is the gift of a living, intelligent Being, and comes to us bearing the seal of His love. The Jews were separated to this end, that God's methods and purposes with all men might be laid bare, that for-once the Hand might be clearly manifest which is busy about every life. All things happened unto them for our ensamples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.

II. The motive which is pleaded for all the noblest human effort is God's example. God has done thus and thus for you; "Go ye and do likewise" for your fellow-men.

III. The exhortations of Scripture are amply sustained by our own experience of life. There is no joy that fills man's heart which is comparable with that which he shares with God. Man's gladdest experiences, his most self-approved acts and ministries, are those which have absolutely no explanation but in his Godlikeness.

IV. Part of this Godlike duty finds expression in the text. "They shall not appear before the Lord empty." Help God, for His great mercy's sake, to help the world.

V. Another great thought of the Old Testament is the help which it is in man's power to render to God. These old records show us how much there is that God's heart most deeply cares for in which our help is essential. His ends can never be reached without us in the way in which His wisdom has ordered the world.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 71.

REFERENCES: xvi. 17.—Parker, vol. v., p. 10. xvi. 18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 268. xvi.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 255.

Chap. xvii., ver. 16.—"Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."

It is not now necessary to trace the historical connection of this fragment of a verse. It forms an appropriate motto and admonition for the close of the year.

I. The close of a year is a most significant time for the taking of spiritual stock. It is well to have a clearing out, even if one is afraid he may be suffocated with the lifted dust. Many a Christian man is hindered in growth by reason of his proud trying to retain an old experience, of which he can make nothing valuable, but which he thinks he is bound to defend for consistency's sake.

II. This, again, is a good time for us to give over lackadaisical complainings about short chances in the past. You will not have to take the same chances again. "Ye shall henceforth return no more by that way" of youth. But does anybody really want to do that? Victor Hugo confessed to a friend that the most disagreeable advance in age to him had been from thirty-nine to forty. "But," said his companion, "I should think it a great deal brighter to be forty than fifty." "Not at all," replied Hugo; "forty years is the old age of youth, while fifty is the youth of old age."

III. It is well to keep a clear look-out for what is still ahead. The glory of every true life is in the time to come. God has not yet exhausted Himself in apocalypses of splendid radiance to His waiting people. There is that in the distance "which eye hath not seen nor ear heard." And wise men may well think of readiness to make the great journey and meet the revelations.

IV. We ought to learn to estimate results and forget processes. It is not necessary to talk continually about faded flowers, and departed joys, and thwarted hopes. It is wiser to let the dead past bury its dead.

V. The close of the year is the time in which to inquire after unfinished work. We should bring our unfulfilled resolutions to God, and ask Him to grant us time to complete them.

C. S. Robinson, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 215.

References: xvii. 16.—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 173; W. M. Taylor, *Contrary Winds*, p. 93; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 374. xvii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 264. xviii. 9-19.—E. White, *Congregationalist*, vol. i., p. 161. xviii. 13.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 403.

Chap. xviii., ver. 15.—"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken."

THE history of Moses is valuable to Christians, not only as giving us a pattern of fidelity towards God, of great firmness, and great meekness, but also as affording us a type or figure of our Saviour Christ. Let us consider in what respects Moses resembled Christ.

I. If we survey the general history of the Israelites, we shall find that it is a picture of man's history as the Gospel displays it to us, and that in it Moses takes the place of Christ. We are born in a spiritual Egypt, a land of strangers. Satan is a tyrant over us, and it seems useless to rebel. Christ is a second Moses, and greater than he, inasmuch as Christ leads from hell to heaven, as Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.

II. Christ reveals to us the will of God, as Moses did to the Israelites. He is our Prophet as well as our Redeemer. Favoured as he was, Moses saw not the true presence of God. Flesh and blood cannot see it. But Christ really saw, and ever saw, the face of God, for He was no creature of God, but the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. Christ has brought from His Father for all of us the full and perfect way of life.

III. Moses was the great intercessor when the Israelites sinned. In this he shadows out the true Mediator between God and man, who is ever at the right hand of God making intercession for us. Moses was excluded from the Promised Land, dying in sight, not in enjoyment, of Canaan, while the people went in under Joshua. This was a figure of Him that was to come. Our Saviour Christ died that we might live; He consented to lose the light of God's countenance that we might gain it. Moses suffered for his own sin; Christ was the spotless Lamb of God. His death is meritorious; it has really gained our pardon.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 118.

REFERENCES: xviii. 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 27. E. H. Gifford, *Twelve Lectures*, p. 151. xviii. 15-19.—Spurgeon. *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1487; J. G. Murphy, *The Book of Daniel*. p. 20. xviii. 15-22.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 273. xviii. 18.—J. Hamilton. *Works*, vol. v., p. 99.

Chap. xix., vers 5, 6—"As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities and live."

I. THERE are many besides the murderer of Uriah who have need to cry with him, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God." (1) This charge may have a fearful applicability to Christian ministers. If ministers neglect to warn the wicked, if they keep back from the people any part of the counsel of God, blood lieth at their door; the angel of vengeance is abroad in pursuit of them. (2) Consider that subtle, undefinable thing called influence. Can you conscientiously say that you have always exerted your influence for good, never for evil? If in one instance you have used it for evil, blood lieth at your door. You have shed the blood of souls, and the life of your own soul is justly forfeit.

II. The spiritual refuge of the sinner is Jesus Christ, and the road by which we flee to Christ is the road of faith. (1) The sinner must fly to Christ as if for his life, as a man flies from a falling house or a beleaguered town. (2) As impediments were removed out of the man-slayer's way, and the road was made as easy and obvious to him as possible, so it is a very plain, simple thing to believe in Christ, and thus to flee to our spiritual cities of refuge. (3) When the merciful Elder, Jesus Christ, comes to the gate of the city of refuge, we can only plead our sinfulness, our infinite desert of condemnation, and God's appointment of Jesus Christ to be a refuge to us. (4) The man-slayer was to abide in the city of his refuge, and so must we abide in ours if we would be safe.

III. There are two points of contrast between the Jewish city of refuge and its New Testament antitype. (1) The city of refuge was permanently available only to such man-slayers as had acted without any evil intent. Not so our city of refuge. Christ is able to save to the uttermost. (2) The man-slayer was to remain in the city until the high-priest died. But our High-priest never dies. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

E. M. GOULBURN, *Sermons Preached in the Parish Church of Holywell*, p. 101.

REFERENCES: xix. 12.—J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, p. 201. xix. 21.—*Ibid.*, p. 180. xix.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 281. xx. 2-4.

J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, p. 167. xx. 8.—W. Ray, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 233; Parker, vol. iv., p. 290; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, p. 177. xx. 10.—*Ibid.*, p. 298. xx. 16.—M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 1; J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, p. 83. xx. 19.—Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 18. xxii. 1-4.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 305. xxii. 6, 7.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 312; S. Cox, *The Bird's Nest*, p. 1. xxii. 8.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 318; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 354.

Chap. xxvi., ver. 11.—"And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee."

It is our duty to give unstinted welcome to every visit of enjoyment with which we may be favoured. We frequently allow streams of refreshment or exhilaration to run past us without dipping into or tasting them; we blunderingly overlook many a cup of soothing and pleasing that is offered to us as we go trudging by. We are slow to discover and seize our golden chances, and hardly know how to make the most of them. At times we are afraid, it would seem, pausing now and then to squeeze a drop or two of severe or melancholy reflection into the goblet, as if there might be sin in having it too rich and sweet. The angel descending to solace us in our Gethsemane with a brief pleasant thrill, with a brief glimpse and gust of pleasure, flashes by under the sombre, wailing olives in vain, is allowed to vanish unharboured and unutilised.

I. Never turn, in your bitterness of spirit, from any ministry of temporal enjoyment that may intervene; never be so wedded to your woes, so shut up and sunk down in them, that you cannot issue forth to accept such ministry. For, remember, we want to be made joyful for our education quite as much as we need to be tried and troubled. To laugh, to luxuriate, to ripple and glow with delight, at times is just as essential for us, as it is at times to weep and suffer.

II. At times some of us may have had the feeling that there is so much misery in the world that it is hardly right to ignore and forget it for a moment in rejoicing. But let us reflect that, since God is our Father and we His children, we are *justified* in losing sight of trouble for a time when He gives us a joy to taste. Being only a child, however I must feel about His world, and share in His travail concerning it, I need not be afraid at intervals to cast the entire load upon Him and let Him carry it alone. Souls must turn aside at times to bask in what sunshine they can find, and be mellowed, and warmed, and

rosied with it, in order to be of service in the darkness and to help to soften and relieve.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 239.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 1.—F. W. Farrar, *Ephphatha, Sermons*, p. 289. xxviii. 6.—J. P. Gledstone, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 168.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 15.—"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the will of the Lord thy God, . . . that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee."

I. THE curse which Moses foretold was the natural consequence of the sins of the people. The Bible meaning of a curse is simply the natural consequence of men's own ill actions.

For even in this life the door of mercy may be shut, and we may cry in vain for mercy when it is the time for justice. This is not merely a doctrine; it is a common, patent fact. Men do wrong and escape again and again the just punishment of their deeds; but how often there are cases in which a man does not escape, when he is filled with the fruit of his own devices, and left to the misery which he has earned.

II. Terrible and heart-searching for the wrong-doer is the message, God does not curse thee; thou hast cursed thyself. God will not go out of His way to punish thee; thou hast gone out of His way, and thereby thou art punishing thyself. God does not break His laws to punish sins. The laws themselves punish; every fresh wrong deed, and wrong thought, and wrong desire of thine sets thee more and more out of tune with those immutable and eternal laws of the moral universe which have their root in the absolute and necessary character of God Himself. The wheels move on, but the workman who should have worked with them is entangled among them. He is out of his place, and slowly, but irresistibly, they are grinding him to powder.

III. Let us believe that God's judgments, though they will culminate, no doubt, hereafter in one great day and "one far-off Divine event," are yet about our path and about our bed now, here, in this life. Let us believe that if we are to prepare to meet our God, we must do it now, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being, and can never go from His presence, never flee from His spirit.

C. KINGSLEY, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 262.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 47, 48.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Lent to Passiontide*, p. 150. xxviii. 67.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi, p. 32 xxix. 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1638.

Chap. xxix., ver. 10.—"Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God."

INTENSE in their significance, fresh in their solemnity, as when Moses uttered them to the listening multitudes on the farther shores of Jordan, the echo of these warning words rolls to us across the centuries. They express the formative principle, the regulating conception, the inspiring influence, of every greatly Christian life. The very differentia of such a life—that is, its distinguishing feature—is this, that it is spent always and consciously in the presence of God.

From the fact that we stand before God we gather: (1) A lesson of warning. Surely there is a warning—for the forgetful a startling, for the guilty a terrible, even for the good man a very solemn warning—in the thought that not only our life in its every incident, but even our heart in its utmost secrets, lies naked and open before Him with whom we have to do. (2) The thought that we stand before God involves not only a sense of warning, but a sense of elevation, of ennoblement. It is a sweet and a lofty doctrine, the highest source of all the dignity and grandeur of life. (3) A third consequence of life spent consciously in God's presence is a firm, unflinching, unwavering sense of duty. A life regardful of duty is crowned with an object, directed by a purpose, inspired by an enthusiasm, till the very humblest routine carried out conscientiously for the sake of God is elevated into moral grandeur, and the very obscurest office becomes an imperial stage on which all the virtues play. (4) The fourth consequence is a sense of holiness. God requires not only duty, but holiness. He searcheth the spirits; He discerneth the very reins and heart. (5) This thought encourages us with a certainty of help and strength. The God before whom we stand is not only our Judge and our Creator, but also our Father and our Friend. He is revealed to us in Christ, our elder Brother in the great family of God.

F. W. FARRAR, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: xxix. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 723.

Chap. xxix., ver. 19.—"I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart."

CERTAIN temptations assail us as powerfully through the imagination as if they assumed the most distinctly palpable and tangible form. Eve was assailed through her imagination when the devil said to her, "Ye shall be as gods;" and Jesus Christ was assailed through His imagination when the

"kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" were offered to Him.

I. If temptation were to come to us in all its grossness, and force upon the calm, steady eyes of our reason its vilest aspect and purpose, it would have small chance with us. But it comes through an imagination which throws its hideousness into perspective and creates a halo around its immediate advantages. So we dupe our own hearts, and light our way with the lamp of fancy into the darkness where no lamp can burn.

II. It is imagination, too, that supplies a ready answer to the reproaches of conscience. Good is to come out of the evil. Imagination pleads that its purpose has in some way miscarried, or the evil would certainly have been less.

III. The sinful exercise of the imagination is not the less, but probably the more, aggravated because of its supposed secrecy.

The subject thus opened reminds us: (1) of the intense and awful spirituality of God and His judgment; (2) of the wonderful provision He has made for the cleansing and inspiration of our innermost thoughts.

PARKER, *The Ark of God*, p. 296.

Chap. xxix., ver. 29.—"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

I. THERE are certain domains of thought and government accessible to none but God.

II. Impenetrable secrecy is compatible with paternal benevolence.

III. Divine secrecy is no plea for human disobedience. In the words of our text we have: (1) an acknowledgment of a Divine revelation—"the things which are revealed." (2) A definition of the relationship in which God stands to humankind—"all the words of this law." Then God is our Lawgiver. (3) A distinct recognition of man's power to obey the law—"that we may *do* all the words."

IV. Inquisitiveness into secret things will necessarily produce great unrest.

PARKER, *Hidden Springs*, p. 172 (see also *The City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 325).

THE fact that there are some mysteries which are insoluble is attested: (1) by the long and painful experience of mankind;

(2) by the teaching of the materialistic thinkers of the day. The text recognises alike the spirit of uninquiring reverence and of rational freedom.

I. Some men say, "We cannot accept revelation. We accept the excellent moral teachings of the Bible, because they commend themselves to our reason and to the reason of the race; but what we cannot accept are these mysteries which are revealed in the New Testament." In answer to this we reply, A mystery is not a revelation. It is the very opposite of a revelation. We freely admit that there are mysteries confronting us in the Old and New Testaments. Truths are intimated, suggested, pointed at, dimly outlined, like a mountain castle scarce seen through the mists of evening which fill the valley; but, inasmuch as they are not clear, to that extent they cannot be said to be revealed. These things are beyond us. They are Divine mysteries which it is reverent for us to place with the secret things which belong unto the Lord God.

II. There are those who say they cannot receive a revelation on the ground that it is supernatural, that they only know that which comes through the mind of man and is capable of justifying itself to the human reason. Now we affirm that the Bible revelations have come through the mind of man. They were convictions, certainties, in some man's mind, which he declared to his fellows. A truth of inspiration is no truer than a truth of induction or demonstration. Truth is simply truth wherever it may come from or however it may be demonstrated. Revelation is natural and at the same time supernatural. It comes from the mind of man; it comes according to the mind and demonstration of God.

III. The one ever-speaking revelation of the mind of God is the history of man. "If we miss the truth," says Jeremy Taylor, "it is because we will not find it, for certain it is that all the truth which God hath made necessary He hath also made legible and plain; and if we will open our eyes, we shall see the sun, and if we will walk in the light, we shall rejoice in the light."

W. PAGE ROBERTS, *Liberalism in Religion*, pp. 28, 38.

REFERENCES: xxix. 29.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 193; R. Macellar, *Memorials of a Ministry on the Clyde*, p. 81; Parker, vol. iv., p. 324. xxx. 6.—*Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 1st series, vol. iv., p. 73. xxx. 11-14.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 2nd series, p. 350. xxx. 14.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 10.

Chap. xxx., ver. 15.—"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."

Moses said these words first to Israel. But God says them to each of us, to every one who has a conscience, a sense of right and wrong, and sense to see he ought to do right and shun wrong. I have heard a great man call this the *granite* on which all other spiritual beliefs rest, and so it is. It is taken for granted and built on in all God's revelation, in all Christ's atoning work, in all the Holy Spirit's operation. This is a choice we must each make, not, like the fabled one, for once, but day by day, continually. It is the resultant of all our life.

I. This daily endeavour to be holy, to be like Christ, will be a spring of interest which will never fail, when other interests fail with our failing selves.

II. If we choose well, we must end well. If we grow here fit for a better place, pure, kind, hard-working, unselfish, we cannot be a failure.

III. It is not for ourselves only, either here or hereafter, that God bids us choose good. We have got in our keeping the worldly peace of others.

IV. Love to the Redeemer, who died for us and lives for us, is the great spring of all right-doing. Only by the grace of God can we choose good.

A. K. H. B., *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 177.

Reference: xxx. 15-22.—Parker, *Christian Chronicle*, July 16th, 1885.

Chap. xxx., ver. 19.—"Therefore choose life."

There is one choice which we must all make; and if that choice is once well made, it will very much secure all other choices, for the reason why we so often choose badly is because we have failed in that one great choice of all.

I. "*Therefore* choose life." Why "therefore"? (1) Because the option rests with yourself. You are free to take which you will. (2) Because the alternative is tremendous, and there is no middle space; it must be life or death. (3) Because life is everything. All that is worth having in this world or the next is in that word "life." "Therefore choose life."

II. What is life? (1) The *source* of life was originally the breath of God. That life was lost when man fell, but only lost to make way for a better restoration. By a mystical process, which we cannot explain, Christ became the Head of a body.

"Because He lives, we live also," and live for ever. This is the source of life. (2) Look at the substance of life, what it is, its reality. Everything is real in proportion as it is consistent with and carries out its own element. Your element is a "body and soul and spirit." Life's real substance is to know God, to enjoy God, to serve God. It might be safe to sum it up and say, Life is work: the inner work in one's own soul and the outer work of Christian usefulness. The great thing every one has to do is to find out his own proper work, what God has given him to do. And that work is life.

III. What is life's object? There may be a series of motives, but the end of motives is the glory of God. We must not seek our own glory, because God seeks His. All is His, and therefore to take any glory from anything is robbing God.

IV. Christ has said, "I am the Life." Choose the Christ who has so long chosen you, and you will live. He will be in you a necessity of life; you will live for God and with God for ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 157.

Chap. xxx., vers. 19, 20.—"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you," etc.

I. "I CALL heaven and earth to record against you," says Moses. This was no idle rhetorical formula. The open sky over his head was the witness and pledge of permanence, the sign that in the midst of perpetual change there is that which abides. The earth at his feet had been given to man that he might dress it and keep it, and bring food for his race out of it. The one said to man, "Thou art meant to look above thyself. Only in doing so canst thou find endurance, illumination, life." The other said, "Thou art meant to work here. Thou must put forth an energy which is not in me, or I will not yield thee my fruits."

II. But Moses says, "I have set before thee life and death," etc. There is no hint given to the Israelite upon which he can build a dream of security; he is warned in the most fearful language against forgetting the things his eyes had seen. But all the terrible warnings and prophecies of what he and his descendants may do hereafter imply that *he* is in a blessed condition and that they will be.

III. And therefore he goes on, "Choose life." Say deliberately to thyself, "I do not mean to give up the ground on which I am standing. God has placed me on it; all that is contrary to God will not prevail against God, and therefore need

not prevail against me." "*Choose life*" is still the command at all times.

IV. The great reward of choosing life is, "that *thou mayest love the Lord thy God*," etc. The growth of love and knowledge is always proclaimed in Scripture as the reward and prize of a man who walks in the way in which God has set him to walk, who chooses life, and not death.

V. "That it may go well with thee and with thy seed after thee." The great lesson that the fathers are to teach their children is, that God will be the present and living Guide of each succeeding race as much as He had been of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 289.

REFERENCES: xxx. 19.—H. Alford, *Sermons*, p. 1; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 68. xxx. 19, 20.—C. Kingsley, *Westminster Sermons*, p. 271. xxxi. 7, 8.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 195.

Chap. xxxi., ver. 13.—"And that their children, which have not known anything, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

I. GODLINESS in children is accounted by Christians generally to be extraordinary, or at least uncommon, and perhaps there are but few godly children. But there is no theory of Christian doctrine with which we are acquainted which excludes children from the experience and practice of godly life. In the present state of human nature, the two fundamental principles of religious life are repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is nothing in childhood which prevents repentance and faith becoming living and abiding sources of action in children.

II. We must admit that a child's knowledge of sin is necessarily small, that its sense of sin is feeble, and its sorrow for sin shallow. But then it must be remembered that, comparatively speaking, the actual transgressions of children are but few, and that godly sorrow is a slow growth, even in the adult convert. If the understanding of a child be less enlightened, the soul is more sensitive; if the judgment be less formed, the conscience is more tender; if there be but little strength of purpose, the heart is less hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

III. If decided piety be within reach of a child, how is it that

the absence of godliness from children does not more distress us, and that piety in children is not more our aim and hope, and that it is not more frequently the burden of our prayer? Because godliness is not looked for in children; it is not seen where in many cases it exists; and the signs of it are not trusted when they are clearly manifest.

IV. Godly children are God's workmanship, created by Jesus Christ, and if we would be the means of leading children into true godliness, we must bid them look to our Saviour Jesus.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 404.

Chap. xxxi., ver. 14.—"Behold, thy days approach that thou must die."

I. THOSE who live chiefly for this world try not to think of death, because they would like nothing better than to live on here for ever. But the shutting of our eyes to the approach of death does not make him turn away from us, and therefore our wisest and safest course is to prepare for his coming, whether it be near or far off.

II. Death does not occupy that place in the word of God which it does occupy in that religion of ours which professes to be derived from the word of God. In the New Testament death is simply treated as an abolished thing. The second coming of Christ is always, in the exhortations of the New Testament, substituted for death. Death, in the eye of faith, is not the end, but the beginning, of all; it is the commencement of the "life that knows no ending."

III. If Christ has robbed death of its sting, it does not behove us to look at death as if He had not done so. Let us view the approach of death as something which He means should bring us nearer to Him. We must pray Him, since the days approach in which we must die, that death may not find us unprepared. And as we look forward to the future, we must commit our way and ourselves into His keeping.

F. E. PAGET, *Village Sermons: Advent to Whit Sunday*, p. 44.

REFERENCES: xxxi. 14.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 333. xxxi. 23.—I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 138. xxxi., xxxii.—*Ibid.*, p. 341; J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 333. xxxii. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 367. xxxii. 5.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiii., No. 780; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 359. xxxii. 8, 9.—M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 172. xxxii. 8-13.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 247. xxxii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 451; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 320; A. Maclaren, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 221; W. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 132. xxxii. 11.—G. Morrison, *The House of God*, p. 46.

Chap. xxxii., vers. 11, 12.—"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."

WITHOUT attaching any mystic meaning to this figure of the eagle, we may readily discover the great principles of God's action that it was intended to illustrate.

I. The Divine discipline of life is designed to awaken man to the development of his own powers. The instinct of the eagle in breaking up her nest is to arouse the native energies of her young. The power of flight is in them, but unknown, because it has never been called into play; it is a slumbering faculty, and must be awakened into action. Man's soul is formed into God's image by the right action of his spiritual powers, and these powers are only awakened by the activity of God. (1) The great purpose of all spiritual discipline is to render men Divine. By the very constitution of the soul, the Godlike image must be formed by awakening the energies that lie slumbering within. The soul contains in itself the germinal forces of the life it may possess in the future ages. (2) The image of the text suggests two methods of Divine action: the stimulating and the exemplary. The eagle breaks up her nest, and is not the voice of life's experiences God's summons to man to rise and live to Him? God sends a shock of change through our circumstances, and rouses us from repose.

II. Discipline attains its end only when regarded as under the control of a father. It is obvious that the instinct of the eagle is that of parental affection. (1) Believe in the Father, and you submissively accept the mysterious in life. (2) Believe in the Father, and you shall strive to realise the purpose of this discipline. We have no impulse to any spiritual aspiration, to any true self-sacrifice, to the exertion of any spiritual energy, which is not awakened by the touch of the Eternal Spirit. Let us then awake out of sleep. God is breaking up our material resting-places in order that we may aspire towards the imperishable and the immortal.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 131.

I. THIS passage suggests the thought of Divine incitements. The world is all alive with nest-building. Men seek comfort, satisfaction, and rest in outward things. In a scene where all is flowing they try to make fixity. God shatters what man builds, drives away what man gathers, takes what man in vain tries to hold.

II. Divine example. "As an eagle fluttereth over her young," as showing them the way to fly, so God sets before us the example of the good, the strivings of the great, the lives of the saints, and chiefly the perfect pattern, the perfect life of His incarnate Son. With the disturbances and dislodgments of life will be found very often invitations, and possibilities, and enlargements

III. Divine protection. "The eagle spreadeth abroad her wings." The spreading of the wings is the promise of protection to the young birds, both while in the nest and while attempting to fly. So here we have the Divine protection amply promised and assured to us by the word of God.

IV. Divine compulsion. "As an eagle . . . taketh them," if they will, in helpfulness; if they will not, in compulsion; in one way or another they must be got out of the nest. God takes oftentimes one and another in quiet, common life, and by a kind of sacred violence forces them into new scenes and almost into better states.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 219.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 11, 12.—W. Haslam, *The Threefold Gift of God*, Part I., p. 41; T. Cuyler, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 529; W. M. Taylor, *The Limitations of Life*, p. 78. xxxii. 13.—H. Melvill, *The Lothbury Lectures*, p. 19. xxxii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1784.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 29.—"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

I. THAT there is very generally a strange want of reflection and concern respecting our condition as mortal is most apparent in many plain, familiar proofs. Perhaps nothing in the world, that appears so out of consistency, is so obvious. Notice: (1) The very small effect of the memory of the departed in the way of admonition of our own mortality. (2) How little and seldom we are struck with the reflection how many things we are exposed to that might cause death. (3) How soon a recovery from danger sets aside the serious thought of death. (4) How many schemes are formed for a long future time with as much interest and as much anticipating confidence as if there were no such thing in the world as death.

II. When it is asked, How comes this to be? the general explanation is that which accounts for everything that is wrong, namely, the radical depravity of our nature. There are doubtless special causes, such as: (1) The perfect distinctness of life and death. (2) Even the certainty and universality of death may

be numbered among the causes tending to withdraw men's thoughts from it. (3) The general presumption of having long to live is a cause of a more obvious kind. (4) Another great cause is that men occupy their whole soul and life with things that preclude the thought of its end. (5) There is in a large proportion of men a formal, systematic endeavour to keep off the thought of death.

III. Let us remember that to end our life is the mightiest event that awaits us in this world. And it is that which we are living but to come to. To have been thoughtless of it, then, will ultimately be an immense calamity; it will be to be in a state unprepared for it. And consider that there is a sovereign antidote to the fear of death. There is One that has Himself yielded to death, in order to vanquish it for us and take its terrors away.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, 2nd series, p. 241.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 120; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 304; J. C. Hare, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 415. xxxii. 31.—D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3342; R. Glover, *By the Waters of Babylon*, p. 153. xxxii. 32.—H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 280. xxxii. 35.—A. Tholuck, *Hours of Christian Devotion*, p. 128; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 455. xxxii. 36.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 45. xxxii. 37, 38.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 225.

Chap. xxxii., ver. 39.—"I wound and I heal."

THE text declares with a magnificent fulness the personality and the power of God.

I. God as healing is made visible to us in Jesus. The miracles of Jesus were mainly connected with the bodies of men. There were two great reasons for this. (1) One reason is to show the close connection of sickness with sin. One indication of this we have in a great fact of our Saviour's life. He was incarnate that He might have sympathy with us. Yet He was never sick. He had no particular sickness because He had no sin. (2) Christ's miracles of healing were not the luxury of a Divine good-nature. They were not random alms that cost Him nothing. A perceptible exhaustion of vital energy accompanied the exertion of His power. Here then is a second cause for our Lord's miracles of healing: to teach us self-denial and thought for the sick. He took to Himself God's motto, "I heal," for one of the highest of theological and for one of the tenderest of practical reasons.

II. We now consider God as wounding. As to the wounds of suffering humanity—sickness—two considerations practically

diminish the perplexity which they bring to us when we consider them as existing under a rule of love. (1) One of these considerations is the intention of sickness as a part of the spiritual discipline of the Christian life. (2) Another moral object of sickness is to draw out the fulness of Christian sympathy, scientific and personal.

III. As we enlarge our view, the Divine pity predominates. There are, indeed, voices of anguish on every breeze; there are shadows in the foreground of the picture of the history of humanity. But these voices of anguish are only surface discords, underlying which is a wondrous harmony. All those shadows do but set off the picture that closes with the long golden distances of sunlit hills whose atmosphere is perfect wisdom, whose magic colouring drops from the tender pencil of perfect love.

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *The Great Question*, p. 30.

REFERENCES: xxxii. 39.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1465. xxxii. 44-52.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 443. xxxii. 47.—J. C. Jones, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 664; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 457; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 124. xxxii. 48-52.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 158; H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 193. xxxii.—Parker, vol. iv., pp. 350, 365, 375. xxxiii. 1-5.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 23. xxxiii. 1-12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 281. xxxiii.—M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 173.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 3.—"All His saints are in Thy hand."

OF Israel, as a company of the Lord's saints, Moses says that they are all in God's hand. This was true of the ancient Israel in an important sense, but it is still more fully and extensively true of the spiritual Israel. However much they may differ in many respects from each other, the children of God are all alike in respect of His gracious dealings with them. All His saints are in His hand.

I. The hand of God is a plastic or forming hand, and all His saints are under its transforming power.

II. The hand of the Lord is an upholding and preserving hand, and all His saints enjoy His assistance and protection.

III. The hand of God is a guiding and directing hand, and His saints enjoy the benefit of this in the conduct of their great spiritual interests and business.

IV. The hand of God is a chastising hand, and His saints

are sometimes in His hand that they may receive needed correction.

W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 324.

THE text shows us how elaborately God lays out His whole being as altogether engaged for His own people,—first His heart; then His hand; then His feet; then His lips. "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand, and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words."

I. A saint means three things. He is (1) a being whom God has set apart for Himself. In this sense David said: "I am holy." In this sense the whole Church are saints. (2) A saint is a person in whom sanctification is going on. Every one in whom the Holy Ghost is acting at this moment is a saint. (3) Those who are perfected in holiness are saints indeed.

II. Saints are in God's hands: (1) as property; (2) in order that He may deal with them as He sees fit; (3) in order that He may hold them up; (4) in order that He may keep them always near Him.

III. "And they sat down at Thy feet." The passage combines the two ideas of rest and teaching.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 6th series, p. 97.

REFERENCES: xxxiii. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 283. xxxiii. 6-17.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, pp. 53, 79, 97, 213, 225.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 12.—"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders."

IN the Scriptures God is regarded as the dwelling-place of His people, of the holy and redeemed soul. This thought was ever before the Hebrew mind: God is the home of the soul. It is a great, an awful, an infinite thought.

I. "Of Benjamin he said." By a gifted and inspired second sight, the man whose eyes the Lord had opened beheld the arrangement of the tribes. Benjamin was one of the smallest of the tribes. It held its inland, and insulated, and secluded position, bounded by Dan, Judah, Ephraim, and Reuben. "He shall dwell between His shoulders." Some render this term "among His mountains." And, indeed, there the Temple was built—on the territory of Benjamin and Judah. There they were together—the weakest by the strongest of the tribes.

II. "Beloved.' The title authenticates the blessing. It is a word of beautiful reciprocations; we look up and think of Him, and rejoice because we are "accepted in the Beloved," and we look upon the Church and see that it is the "elect of God, holy and beloved."

III. Safety. All things will serve Benjamin. Whatever happens, "the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety." "In safety." Much of the world's position and place is only like a book of tragedies, bound in gold and crimson velvet—all fair without, all black within, leaves of gold and lines of blood. The lots of some men are like those who live in houses paved with pearl and walled with diamonds, while all the roof lies open to the wind and storms. But "the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety." They are remembered, and they are safe.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Dark Sayings on a Harp*, p. 274.

REFERENCE: xxxiii. 12.—Bagnall-Baker, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 121.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 16.—"The goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush."

WE have here the beginning and the ripening of an experience brought close together. Let us think of the young Christian and the old Christian, the same man in his first apprehension and in his ripened knowledge of Christ. Our subject is the nature and method of the growth of Christian character. One general and obvious law is that every healthy growth creates the conditions of new growth, and makes new growth possible. This is the method of Christian growth. There is a continued reaction between Christ and the soul; every new openness is fed with a new love that opens it still more.

I. As every Christian becomes more and more a Christian, there must be a larger and larger absorption of truth or doctrine into life.

II. There will be a growing variety in the Christian character as Christians grow older.

III. The willingness to recognise and welcome individual differences of thought, and feeling, and action increases, too, as Christians grow riper.

IV. Another characteristic of the growing spiritual experience is its ever-increasing independence.

V. Another sign of the growth of Christian character is to be found in the growing transfiguration of duty.

VI. The profoundest and most reliable sign of maturing

spiritual life is the deepening personal intimacy with Him who is the Christian's Life, the Lord Jesus Christ. This growing personal intimacy will have these effects upon us: (1) It must give us a more infinite view of life in general, or, in other words, must make us more unworldly. (2) It will give us more hopefulness. (3) With the growing hopefulness comes a growing courage. (4) It gives that true and perfect poise of soul which grows more and more beautiful as we get tired one after another of the fantastic and one-sided types of character which the world admires.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 39.

REFERENCES: xxxiii. 16.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 256; W. M. Taylor, *Contrary Winds*, p. 200. xxxiii. 18, 19.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, p. 117. xxxiii. 19.—J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 257. xxxiii. 20-25.—F. Whitfield, *The Blessings of the Tribes*, pp. 117, 137, 161, 173, 185.

Chap. xxxiii., ver. 25.—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

THERE are times when Christian men and women will distress themselves with depressing speculations as to the various situations and predicaments in which God's providence may possibly place them, and will suffer doubts to cloud their minds as to whether their faith would stand the test of any severe trial. They are apprehensive whether they shall not grow impatient in mind, faint and weary in faith, utterly overborne in body and spirit. All these misgivings are met by the promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." In ordinary trials, ordinary supplies of strength and support will be apportioned to prayer and honest endeavour; in extraordinary circumstances, extraordinary concessions of the sustaining spirit will be made. Distrust of ourselves, which causes us to lean more appealingly and confidingly upon the strength of God, by no means misbecomes us. But if these fears are traceable to any misgiving as to the paternal purposes of God towards all such as turn to Him in faith and love, then they are unreasonable, and do not become a child of God. We need not ask for help against future and contingent trials; we ask for the day's supply, and the promise extends no further than this. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 196.

I. GOD does not say that in *every* day He will secure us, but for "thy day" the provision shall be made. God gives us no warrant to expect that every day or any day shall bring with it joy, or pleasantness, or comfort; what He says is very prac-

tical; He assures us of sufficient strength for duty and trial: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

II. There is an evident intention in the use of the plural number: "days." From this we gather that the promise does not relate to those few, more prominent days of sorrow and of difficulty which stand out larger than the rest, but equally to the more ordinary days which bring with them nothing but the common routine of everyday duty.

III. The very fact of the increase of our days as life goes on increases our responsibility. Every new year and every new day a man lives is more accountable because more capable, and more solemn because more critical, than the last. And as the days accumulate, so do the mercies. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Never was the most exquisite machine so perfectly adjusted, never was any mathematical proportion so accurate, as each day's grace is set to the margin of each day's work.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 256 (see also *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 13).

THE portion of Asher, in whose blessing the words of the text occur, was partly the rocky northern coast and partly the fertile lands stretching to the base of Lebanon. In the inland part of their land they cultivated large olive groves, and the clause before the text is a benediction on that industry: "Let him dip his foot in oil." And then the metaphor suggested by the mention of the foot is carried on into the next words, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," the tribe being located upon rocky sea-coast, having rough roads to travel, and so needing to be well shod.

I. We have first the thought that God gives us an equipment of strength proportioned to our work—shoes for the road. From this we gather that the road will be rocky and flinty; the rough work will not be far behind the stout shoes.

II. The text assures us of a strength which is not worn out by use. Though we belong to the perishing order of nature by our bodily frame, we belong to the undecaying realm of grace by the spirit that lays hold on God.

III. The second clause of the verse promises even more than this. It tells us that the two sums of "thy days" and "thy strength" keep growing side by side, and that as the days increase the strength increases too.

A. MACLAREN, *Weekday Evening Addresses*, p. 32.

I. These words are only a line out of an old Hebrew poem, but they are as English and as human as if we had met them in yesterday's newspaper, or had heard them in the swift and confiding interchange of friendship. Said in a moment, they tell the result of our whole life. "The Lord hath been mindful of His own. He hath not forgotten to be gracious to His people."

II. God, in the plenitude of His power, lay at the back of this promise to the tribal descendants of Asher. It is a threefold benediction: (1) The land of Asher will have abundant harvests. (2) This material opulence will not excite envy among the tribes, or be attacked by marauding invaders. Thy fortresses of defence shall be as invincible as if built of iron and brass. And (3) in complete security, the security of fulness of strength, shall all this prosperity be enjoyed throughout the days of thy tribal life.

III. Although this law came by Moses, it is uttered with more penetrating reality and gracious persuasiveness by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The strength here spoken of is a rest-giving strength.

IV. (1) Remember that our days do not come to us in a multitude, but in regulated succession, and with a largely educating variety. (2) Do not fetch your to-morrows into your to-days. (3) Though our days come in succession, they make a unity, and they will make a beautiful and well-ordered unity if we live them all with God and for men. (4) God is our Home, and from that Home in God what can our outlook be, even in the saddest days, but one of restful hope, quiet expectation, calm dependence on the exhaustless love of our Father in heaven, who has promised that "as our days, so shall our strength be"?

J. Clifford, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 1.

References: xxxiii. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 210; H. W. Beecher, *Forty-eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1; A. Raleigh, *From Dawn to Perfect Day*, p. 337; W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 368; G. Calthrop, *The Temptation of Christ*, p. 244; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 13. xxxiii. 26-28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 803. xxxiii. 27.—A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 190; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, pp. 315, 316; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 624, and vol. xxiv., No. 1413; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 52; *Congregationalist*, vol. vi., p. 729. xxxiii. 29.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1359; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 271; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 549; R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 257. xxxiii.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 390. xxxiii., xxxiv.—J. Monro Gibson, *The Mosaic Era*, p. 345.

Chap. xxxiv., vers. 1-8.

THE death of Moses is a twofold parable :—

I. Of the unrealised hopes of human life, the frequent disappointments, the unfulfilled purposes, which so often characterise it, and which to the affections and to the philosophy of life are so mysterious and painful.

Mark the conditions under which death came to Moses. (1) He died while as yet his physical strength was undiminished. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (2) Moses died while as yet there seemed a great work for him to do—the Jordan to be passed, Jericho to be conquered, the Canaanites driven out, the tribes led to their inheritance, the social, legislative, and religious organisation of the people to be completed. (3) Moses died just when bright prospects of realisation filled his eye; when all the hope of his life was about to be fulfilled, the cup was dashed from his lips, just as it was lifted that he might drink.

We learn from this: (1) Success is not the chief nobility of life. (2) The chief blessedness of life is capability of service. (3) It is a blessed thing to die when the work has been so far done that it justifies the worker, demonstrates his character, vindicates his nobleness, for then he is not ashamed to leave it for completion. (4) The formal denial of our hopes may be the means of perfecting our character. (5) If in our service we have sinned against right methods and tempers of service, it is well that God's disapproval of our sin should be manifested. (6) The prohibition comes with gracious mitigations. Even though a sentence of death, everything that gives death a sting is extracted. (*a*) What greater grace can be wrought in a man than acquiescence in such a mandate? There is no blessedness like the blessedness of submitting ourselves to the wiser will of the heavenly Father, even though it be to drink a Gethsemane cup or to die upon a bitter cross. (*b*) Moses is permitted to prepare for his departure. (*c*) He is permitted to see his successor. (7) God honoured His faithful servant by Himself preparing his sepulchre. (8) God fulfilled His promises and the hopes of His servant in a deeper and higher way than he anticipated.

II. The second parable is of the visions which may inspire human life, its unrealised hopes notwithstanding. To men who live greatly God gives visions through this very idealism of life which are a glorious inspiration and strength, visions of a great faith and of a bright hope, of rest though they toil, of triumph

while they fight, of heavenly perfection and blessedness, the failures and disappointments of earthly life notwithstanding. All men have visions, even the meanest and the worst; but there are no visions of life so great and inspiring as those of religious faith.

H. Allon, *The Vision of God*, p. 207.

References: xxxiv. 2.—Parker, vol. ii., p. 287. xxxiv. 5, 7.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 107.

Chap. xxxiv., ver. 1.—"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan," etc.

We belong to two worlds. Neither the one nor the other completes our life. It is the action and reaction of their influences, the intermingling of their currents, which ministers to our vital progress. Man is strongly beset by the temptation to divide himself, and give himself part to one, part to the other, world; to let the daily round, the common task, have the share which they claim of his time and energy, in dull submission to the inevitable, and then to live what he calls his life in another—it may be a higher, but, alas! it tends terribly to become a lower—world. It is the daily round which makes life, and God will have us *live*. Therefore He keeps us there. The daily, hourly repetition of heavenly acts and efforts is training us for the life of heaven.

I. To Moses was entrusted the noblest, but at the same time the weariest, life-task ever committed to the hand of man. The burden of his people he bore through life; never for one instant was he permitted to lay it down. And to him were visions vouchsafed of Diviner brightness than meaner men could look upon. For him, as for many a faithful pilgrim, the brightest and most blessed vision was the last, from the last mountain summit which lies on the hither side of the river of death.

II. The visions cluster most thickly around death, because those who know what it is to live must die to realise their dreams. Like Moses, they may see the land, but they must die to inherit it,—die with the vision before their spirits, which fades for the moment as they die, but when they pass it is heaven.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Soul's Exodus and Pilgrimage*, p. 334.

References: xxxiv. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 274. xxxiv. 1-5.—E. Bersier, *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 1. xxxiv. 1-7.

—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 193. xxxiv. 1-8.—H. Allon, *The Vision of God*, p. 225 (see also *Sunday Magazine*, 1875, p. 486). xxxiv. 1-12.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 434. xxxiv. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 293; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. i., p. 160; Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 27; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 339; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 447; xxxiv. 5.—A. Scott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 3.

Chap. xxxiv., vers. 5, 6.—"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord," etc.

THE great feature of the record contained in the words before us is the incompleteness of the life of Moses. He died before the people entered the land. This fact suggests two truths: (1) the meaning of unfulfilled purposes in life, and (2) the encouragement to men who die with their earthly purposes unattained. Moses died with his life's purpose apparently unfulfilled. It is evident that he felt this as one of the saddest aspects of his departure. One thought had given meaning to his history for eighty years—the thought of guiding the nation into the land promised to his forefathers. Why must Moses see his own hope fade and vanish, and feel that life had no reward? What was the meaning of his death at that time?

I. The great purpose of the life of Moses was not permitted to be carried out because of his sin. One act of rebellion in striking the rock had prevented its accomplishment. If we ask why that single and apparently trifling act of disobedience unfitted him to lead the people into the land, while men far more rebellious and with less temptation afterwards became their rulers, it is scarcely possible to find an adequate reply. It may be that God would show how one act may darken the whole of man's earthly hopes, how the subtle influence of one act of disobedience—because in disobedience lies the germ of all sin—may pervade with its gloom the whole of a man's history, and cause his holiest efforts to fail just when they seemed about to succeed.

II. But we want to know more than that. We must ask whether life is really so incomplete as it seems. Is it so profound a failure? The history before us gives the answer. The purpose that Moses might not carry out was to be acomplished by Joshua, his successor. His life therefore had not failed, for his labour had inspired a man who had caught his spirit and was to finish the work he had begun. We see

here the universal law that there is a spiritual connection between men. Age is joined by bonds of influence to age. Man is thus bound for ever to future generations.

III. But the question comes, Is that the only manner in which life's highest purposes find their fulfilment? To that the history before us gives no reply, but by looking at the question in the light of Christianity we may confidently answer the inquiry. Christ redeemed all life; He glorified it all: therefore we may believe that no earnest efforts of this life are ever for the man himself really unfulfilled; all great aims are realised in the end.

E. L. HULL, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 119.

REFERENCES: xxxiv. 5, 6.—C. Kingsley, *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, p. 222; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 274. xxxiv. 5-7.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. v., p. 313.

Chap. xxxiv., ver. 6.—"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

WE shall take the account of the death and burial of Moses, and seek to show how it was fitted to be a source of fruitful reflection to the Old Testament Church.

I. God will have no one, living or dead, to stand between His creatures and Himself. The first great lesson which the Jewish people were to be taught was the supremacy of the one true God. It was the lifelong work of Moses to fix this truth of God's sovereignty on the people's minds. And yet what he had done for them made it not unlikely that their reverence for him might prove their snare, and that they might be tempted to give him the place he desired to secure for God. Moses died apart, and was buried in secret, where his grave could be dishonoured by no pilgrimage and where no false veneration could rear altars to his memory. And this first lesson did not fail. The nation worshipped many strange deities, but it never gave the place of God to His prophets.

II. God wishes men to see something more left of His servants than the outward shrine. In the history of the greatest and best, the tomb is often remembered and the life forgotten. It is an easier thing to revere the dust than to follow the example. God takes away the grave of Moses that the people may have before them, in full and undisturbed relief, the man himself. The sepulchre of the greater Prophet than Moses is equally unknown. God has made the march of armies and the

desolation of centuries do for the sepulchre of Christ what His own hand did for the grave of Moses.

III. God takes the honour of His servants into His own keeping. "The Lord buried him." There is a higher honour conferred upon him than if all Israel had met to weep and lament, or the world assembled to his obsequies.

IV. God would teach men that He has a relation to His servants which extends beyond their death. The great truths of life and immortality must surely have begun to stir in the hearts of thoughtful men when they knew this, that "the Lord had buried him."

V. God would teach men from the very first that His regard is not confined to any chosen soil. The death of Christ has consecrated the soil of the world. Wherever men kneel with a pure heart they find God's mercy-seat, and wherever they are buried they are in holy ground.

VI. The seeming failure in a true life may at last have a complete compensation.

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 153.

REFERENCES: xxxiv. 6.—Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Cambridge Lent Sermons*, 1864, p. 253. xxxiv. 7.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 58. xxxiv. 9.—S. A. Brooke, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 110. xxxiv. 10.—J. H. Jellett, *The Elder Son, and Other Sermons*, p. 77. xxxiv. 10-12.—W. M. Taylor, *Moses the Lawgiver*, p. 451. xxxiv.—Parker, vol. iv., p. 400; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 289.

JOSHUA.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 255. i. 1-9.—Parker, vol. v., p. 45. i. 1-10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, p. 280. i. 2.—J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 137. i. 2-6.—S. A. Brooke, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 126. i. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1214; J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 86. i. 5, 6.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 55.

Chap. i., ver. 6.—"Be strong and of a good courage."

THERE are two kinds of strength and courage. There is animal strength and there is moral strength; there is animal courage and there is moral courage. And although the strength of active limbs and firm muscles and the courage which men share with the lower animals are not to be despised, but praised and sought after in their degree, yet it is to the nobler qualities the text chiefly refers when it says, "Be strong and of a good courage."

I. The need of strength and courage. God gave this word of good cheer to Joshua, and repeated it thrice over, so that he might never forget it. Joshua and his men needed it, or God would not have said it to him thrice so earnestly. You will need to hear this cheering cry: (1) in the hour of confession; (2) in the hour of temptation; (3) in the hour of misfortune; (4) in the hour of death.

II. The source of strength and courage. "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." This is the secret. It is to have God ever near, a Friend unseen to others, but visible to us. Christ with us—that will make us strong and courageous. He knows all the dangers that are before us. Our enemies are strong—the wicked heart, the tempting world, the unknown future. But greater is He that is with us than they that are with them. No power can stand against us if He is on our side. And, best of all, He loves us. If we know that Christ

loves us and that He has all power and knows all that is before us, what have we to fear?

J. STALKER, *The New Song*, p. 141.

Chap. i., ver. 6, 7.

THIS exhortation to be strong and very courageous is given solely with *moral* application, is applied to the keeping of the law of God. The words of Divine injunction rise to the point of greatest emphasis and intensity when the thing commanded is a simple, continuous, unswerving obedience. Applying the subject to ourselves, we have—

I. A sufficient rule of guidance for life. Joshua had; we have. There was a law of God then by the keeping of which he and all his people might approve themselves to the Lord, and be strong men and heroes. There is a law of God now, fuller, richer, more spiritual, more complete, in the keeping of which we may approve ourselves to the Master, Christ. Our law is the whole Gospel, as requiring from us a practical, and loving, and continuous obedience. To be "strong" is to make endeavour to go forward and grasp something in the Divine life; it is to take up a certain position in practical obedience and say clearly, "I am here: I stand by this." To be "of good courage" is to maintain that position against the force of temptation and opposition of every kind. (1) Strength and courage are needed at home and *with ourselves* before we meet the world at all. The critical part of the struggle is within. (2) Strength and courage are needed in the Church; *i.e.* among Christian people. (3) Strength and courage are needed when we go more fully out into the world. We need courage to live honestly, courage to live simply, courage to *speak* frankly and boldly in condemnation of the speech or the action of others.

II. We have in the context direction how we may attain this temper and habit of Christian courage. It is fed by truth, by the law or the revealed truth of God. When the soul has found the flowing fountains of strength, and drinks of the same day by day, her courage will be day by day renewed.

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 89.

REFERENCES: i. 6, 7.—A. P. Stanley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 17. i. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 796; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 132; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 31; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 209; H. M. Butler, *Harrow Sermons*, 1st series, p. 73. i. 8.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 193.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

THIS expression "Be strong" does not mean "Be strong in body," but "Be strong in *mind;*" "Be strong in spirit;" "Be brave."

An order like this could not have been a mere mockery, an order which Joshua was unable to obey. The word which bade him be strong was an assurance at the same time that if he would, he might be strong according to his day.

I. The first secret of true courage is to know and be sure that we have some power. Hence the wisdom of the maxim of the ancients, "Know thyself"—learn to see what thy real capacity is, and knowing that, shrink not from venturing on putting it to the proof. It is not too much to say that all men go wrong by underestimating themselves? For what deeper self-depreciation is there than for a man to live in the world forgetful of what he is brought here for—forgetful of his Christian privileges, of his Christian name, of his Christian freedom?

II. We all have some power; the question is, How much and what? That is the question we should ask ourselves every day; it is the great question of our early life especially, for on the right answering of it all our success depends. Our weaknesses guarded against often become our strength; and our best lessons, if we heed them, are our mistakes. Joshua's strength was a knowledge of his weakness. Beware of thinking you have no strength because you are not omnipotent. God says to us all, whatever worthy work we are entering upon, "Be of good courage; be strong!"

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 97.

REFERENCES: i. 9.—J. Ellison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 305; *Congregationalist*, vol. vii., p. 400. i. 16-18.—Parker, *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. i., p. 626. i., etc.—G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. i., p. 156. ii.—A. Saphir, *Found by the Good Shepherd*, p. 383.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-18.

SPIES are a part of the unhappy machinery of war. They are counted as necessary as the general, or as the boy who blows the bugle. It is with an army and in a war that Joshua is now to display Jehovah, and he must employ all the arts of the soldier. It would have gone hard with the two spies if they had not been so strangely housed. Rahab took her own life in her hands not to endanger theirs. She was artful, she was

brave, she was noble, she was mean; she received them at her door in peace, she let them out at her window by stealth; she sent her own townsmen an idle chase by the river, and she sent the strangers in safety to the hills, just *because* she knew that the men were Israel's spies.

I. Rahab's words (vers. 9—11) let us know the feelings with which the Canaanites regarded Israel in the wilderness. The fame and the fear of Israel's name had preceded the people like the wind travelling before a thunderstorm. It was a thing of mystery—a nation that fed from the night and drank from the stones; it was a phantom host that fought no one knew how. Still Jericho was determined to resist. It might be in vain, but its king would try his sword against this spiritual thing that called itself the people of Jehovah. There was a different spirit in one breast in Jericho, and it was the breast of a woman. As sailors have found a mere timber of a ship hopelessly but faithfully pointing to the northern star, so from amidst the fragments of what was once a woman's life, as they drifted in the dusk along the streets of Jericho, Rahab's heart was trembling away towards the star that should come out of Jacob and the sceptre that would rise out of Israel. There is a lesson for us here. Surely there is a Diviner duty for us than, like the wind, to chase the withered leaves of a blighted life along our streets, if only far enough from our church doors. Surely there is manlier work for men than to trample on the faded flowers of the forest.

II. Thus from an unlikely quarter we are taught of the power of faith. In the affray of war Rahab sat up there with her hope, trimmed to burning like a lamp, as unafraid as the man in the tower when the storm is round the lighthouse.

III. We have also explained to us the nature of faith. Rahab did not know what the word "faith" meant, but the thing itself was in her heart, and it found expression, not in words, but in works.

Thus it befell the spies at Jericho; and after three days in the mountains, they took their report to Joshua. He heard what they had to say, and in the night the tribes of Israel struck their tents, and in the dawn of the morning the tall grey cloud above the ark of Jehovah was feeling its way down to the fords of the Jordan.

ARMSTRONG BLACK, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 153.

REFERENCES: i. 10-15.—Parker, vol. v., p. 61. i. 16, 18.—*Ibid.*, p. 71. ii. 11.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 385;

Parker, vol. v., p. 273. ii. 21.—J. M. Ashley, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 169; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 109; W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 54; Parker, vol. v., p. 80.

Chap. iii., ver. 4.—"Ye have not passed this way heretofore."

I. "YE have not passed this way heretofore." We are all continually entering upon new paths, which afterwards turn out to be old ones in a new form. Religious experience moves by crises. Israel had not many years before gone across this same desert, and been abruptly turned back to Sinai again, because of rebelliousness in their will. Now they were to go to Canaan, but by another route altogether. We are always beginning new experiences. But we should remember that in the year to come we shall find ourselves travelling over much the same road as last year. There will not be anything extraordinarily surprising. Differences will be in the details.

II. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Then, in the fresh chance God is giving, He offers Himself to be our Helper and Friend. We failed last year. The chances of life are still open. Our parts may be played over again.

III. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Then surely the gifts of God's love have not been appropriated by others nor exhausted by ourselves.

IV. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore;" but it is well to remember that the ark has not passed this way heretofore either. The Israelites were to accept God's guidance implicitly. They were to bear the ark to the front and follow it without any question. It makes life a new thing to put the ark on before it.

V. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Now, with the ark in front, "the joy of the Lord is your strength."

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 224.

I. "YE have not passed this way heretofore." Therefore do not go until you be assured of the Divine presence and protection.

II. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." It is quite right, consequently, to take new ways and untried paths in life.

III. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." There are some particulars in which this must be true even of the least eventful life.

IV. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." The suggestion

is not human, but Divine. It is God Himself that proposes to guide and defend the lives of men.

PARKER, *The Ark of God*, p. 26.

"YE have not passed this way heretofore." The vista of the bygone years was never so long as it is to-day. Time never carried such a burden of events on his shoulders. Changes have taken place in society and in ourselves, and these changes are sure to go on during the coming year. Take these watch-words for the year, notes of the life we must aim to live as the days go by.

I. Vigilance. Have the senses well exercised and ready for quick and true discernment of men and things. Without something of this sleepless vigilance, without the "inevitable eye," we shall lose much of what is in the year, and in the year for us.

II. Promptitude. We should watch for occasions, that we may seize them; for opportunities, that we may improve them; for God in His manifold revealings and comings to us, that we may receive Him as our God.

III. Courage will often be needed to do what the hand finds to do. The possession and cultivation of moral courage therefore is another very necessary preparation for this way that we have not passed heretofore.

IV. Gentleness is a good word to put under the shelter of courage, and a good thing to put among the preparations for the unknown year.

V. We should be poorly furnished for the way without filial confidence, which will easily, when occasion comes, pass into resignation.

VI. Finally, whatever comes, there will always be, not only need and occasion, but ground and reason, for serene, invincible hopefulness. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 350 (see also *Congregationalist*, vol. i., p. 7).

REFERENCES: iii. 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1057; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 5; M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 217; *Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 23; *Old Testament Outlines*, pp. 56, 59. iii 5.—E. B. Pusey, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, 1848, p. 35. iii. 7-iv. 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 277. iii. 9.—Parker, vol. v., p. 274. iii. 11.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 144. iii. 17.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 40. iii.—Parker, vol. v., pp. 88, 97. iv. 6, 7.—Newman Hall, *Sunday Magazine*

1865, p. 389. iv. 9.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., pp. 159, 315; H. Macmillan, *The Olive Leaf*, p. 301. iv. 15, 24.—Parker, vol. v., p. 116. iv. 23.—*Ibid.*, p. 275. iv.—*Ibid.*, p. 107. v. 11.—W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 384. v. 12.—H. Macmillan, *Two Worlds are Ours*, p. 177 (see also *Sunday Magazine*, 1879, p. 125); Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 1; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 183; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 257; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 58.

Chap. v., vers. 13, 14.—"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand," etc.

I. THERE is a lesson here, not inappropriate to the present times, in the fact that Christ appeared to Joshua as a "man of war." Would that image have been used, would Christ have assumed that form, if all war were out of the question?

II. It is still more important to remark how strikingly the manifestations of Christ accommodate themselves to the various circumstances of His people. To Abraham, a wanderer and sojourner in Canaan, He manifests Himself as a wayfaring man. To Jacob, on the eve of an expected conflict with his brother, Christ shows Himself as a comforter. To Joshua, a soldier and an officer, Christ, too, is a soldier in command.

III. Joshua stood before the heavenly Captain, with the shoes from off his feet, to receive orders about the conducting of the siege. So let it be with us all. As soon as a providence, a word, a will, of God shows the special presence of Deity, let it have supremacy, and every human authority, however high, stand in the posture of silent obedience.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 243.

CONSIDER this narrative—

I. As describing an anticipatory appearance of Christ. In reality Christ was not "a man" before He was born in Bethlehem. It was not the body, but only the appearance, of a man that Joshua saw.

II. This narrative foreshadows a peculiar relation that exists between Christ and His followers. (1) They are the Lord's host. The Church is a host on account of its numbers, its unity, its order. (2) Of this host Christ is the Captain. He is Captain by sanction of law and by suffrage of the army, and He is Captain throughout all time.

III. See the consequences of this relation. (1) As Captain of the Lord's host, Christ summons His people to a life of war-

fare. (2) He requires unquestioning obedience to His authority. (3) He furnishes His soldiers with power for their warfare: the power of His Spirit, His truth, and His love. (4) As Captain of the Lord's host, Christ leads us to an enterprise that must end in glory to His own name and to each individual who is on His side.

C. STANFORD, *Symbols of Christ*, p. 89.

NOTICE: I. The agitation of uncertainty in the breast of Joshua. Suddenly, while he brooded, a man stood over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. He saw a vast armed figure towering above him in fighting attitude. He asked with painful suspense, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" wondering anxiously what the apparition meant, and what it portended, whether success or defeat in the coming campaign. And it is with like uncertainty that we front now the new year. We most of us know enough of life to discern, if we lift our eyes, a man with a drawn sword in his hand. We ask in vain as Joshua did when he cried, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" The angel says to the wistfully inquiring man, "As captain of the host of the Lord I am now come."

II. Here, then, was what Joshua saw in looking forward to the future. He did not see victory or defeat, but he saw, to his comfort and relief, that the forces which he led were not his host merely, but the host of the Lord, and that they, together with their leader, were in the hands of the Lord.

III. The message that Joshua received was no declaring of things that had been kept hidden, no weighty revealings, only a plain and familiar admonition to cherish within him a right temper of mind, a right spirit, to see to it that he walked reverently and cultivated purity, as one who dwelt in a temple. That was all the heavens told him when they leaned toward him with a word. "Take heed to yourself, to your character and conduct; be dutiful; be loyal to the vision that is yours." And what better, richer gift could we have from above than a deepened sense of duty and a fresh impulse toward reverent and noble living?

S. A. TIPPLE, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 215.

REFERENCES: v. 13-15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 285; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 795. v.—Parker, vol. v., pp. 126, 136. vi. 18.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 59. vi. 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 285. vi. 26.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 150. vi.—Parker, vol. v., p. 147; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi.,

No. 629. vii. 3.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., No. 1358. vii. 10.—J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 40; S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 3rd series, No. x. vii. 13.—Parker, vol. v., p. 276. vii. 15.—*Ibid.*, vii. 16-26.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 454. vii. 18.—Parker, vol. v., p. 172. vii. 19.—C. J. Vaughan, *Liturgy and Worship of the Church of England*, p. 53; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 406. vii. 19, 20.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Lent to Passiontide*, p. 83. vii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 113. vii. 20, 21.—S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 2nd series, No. ix. vii. 21.—A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 104. vii.—Parker, vol. v., pp. 156, 163. viii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1358. viii. 31.—Parker, vol. v., p. 277. viii.—*Ibid.*, p. 179. ix. 2-27.—*Ibid.*, p. 186. ix. 14.—P. Robertson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 226; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 364. x. 11.—Parker, vol. v., p. 195. x. 12-15.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 1. x. 12-43.—Parker, vol. v., p. 202. x. 39.—J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, p. 83.

Chap. x., vers. 40-42.—"So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings," etc.

I. THE Book of Joshua is part of the history of the Christian Church. However strange it may seem, the work of Joshua in the Old Testament did lead to the work of the second Joshua in the New; He who declared that God is love was the Descendant of him who slew the five kings of the Amorites; the one was the forerunner of the other, and each in his own day was acting, as he fully believed, under the influence and inspiration of the same God.

II. The burden of the whole book, the lesson which it would teach an Israelite, the lesson which it ought to teach us, is this: that God was the real Disposer of events, and that the Israelites triumphed because God had determined that they should triumph.

III. As for the heathen people whom the Israelites destroyed, is it not well that we should know that God is offended when His world is polluted by abominable crime and wickedness? We know that these people *did* pollute the earth, and the Israelites were appointed to sweep them from it. It was a great act of Divine vengeance. The Israelites could not mistake it for anything else: they saw sin punished, and they were told as plainly as possible that as the heathen sinners had suffered, so should they also suffer if they forsook God's law. The Book of Joshua teaches us that God does indeed govern the world; that He takes the land from one and gives it to

another; that He causes the wickedness and folly of man to work out His great designs.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 93.

REFERENCE: x. 42.—Parker, vol. v., p. 278.

Chap. xi., ver. 23.—"So Joshua took the whole land."

THIS text is said to be directly at issue with other statements in the Book of Joshua. Thus the fifteenth chapter ends with these words: "As for the Jebusites, the children of Jerusalem could not drive them out," and in Joshua's dying exhortation he foretells that "a remnant of these nations shall remain among them." From this the conclusion is drawn that the Book of Joshua was not cast at a single jet; that it is a thing of shreds and fragments; that it is made up of two pieces, one Jehovistic, the other Elohistic, patched together by a stupid, not to say dishonest, chronicler. To this we answer: (1) It is only right to notice the qualification in the text. "Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said unto Moses." But the promise to Moses was that it should be taken "by little and little." (2) Viewed geographically and statistically, there were exceptions to be made to the statement contained in the text, and these are fully and fairly related in the sequel. But there was another point of view from which the map of Joshua's conquests might be studied. The Canaanites might still lurk in the mountain fastnesses, in the depth of the primeval forest. But there were haunting voices that hung about the national heart. There were strange, mysterious lights that seemed to stream down from a deep sunset heaven, which touched the old stem of their history, and opened long lanes into the dark vistas of the future. Strengthened by the promises of God, cheered by the declarations of prophecy, animated by the miracles which had led the Israelites across the Jordan and caused the walls of Jericho to fall before the trumpet blast, Joshua, or whoever was the author of this book, wrote down—it was a venture of faith —"So Joshua took the whole land."

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *Sermon Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral*, July 2nd, 1873.

REFERENCES: xi.—Parker, vol. v., pp. 211, 279. xii., xiii.—*Ibid.*, p. 220. xiii. 1.—T. Guthrie, *The Way to Life*, p. 297; Parker, vol. v., p. 279. xiii. 22.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 413. xiii. 33.—Parker, vol. v., p. 280. xiv.—*Ibid.*, p. 228. xv. 15.—W. Lindsay Alexander, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 594; Parker, vol. v., p. 281

xv.-xix.—*Ibid.*, pp. 237, 244. xvii. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1882. xix. 47.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 59. xix. 49.—Parker, vol. v., p. 282. xx. 2.—*Ibid.* xx. 3.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 35. xx. 5.—Parker, vol. v., p. 283. xx. 7.—*Ibid.*, p. 284. xx.-xxiv.—*Ibid.*, p. 254. xxi. 2.—*Ibid.*, p. 285. xxi. 43, 46.—*Ibid.* xxi. 45.—*Ibid.*, p. 286. xxii. 16.—*Ibid.*, p. 287. xxii. 20.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 412.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 1.—"And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age."

At the death of Moses a sudden gleam of heaven, as it were, came over the elder Church. The law seemed for a while suspended as regards its threats and punishments; all was privilege on the one side, all was obedience on the other. Joshua led the people forward, conquering and to conquer; he led them into rest and prosperity. His history is made up of two parts: triumph and peace. Such a blessed season never returned to the Church of Israel till that Church was made glorious by the coming of the Sun of righteousness, and was brought forth out of the shadows and dreariness of the law into the fulness of grace and truth.

I. First, as is very obvious, Joshua is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ as regards his name, for Joshua is in Hebrew what Jesus is in Greek.

II. Joshua is a type of Christ in an act of grace which he exercised, and that to his enemy Rahab. Why have we at once a sinful woman spared and admitted into covenant on her faith, nay privileged in the event to become the ancestress of our Lord, except that in Joshua the reign of the Saviour is typified, and that the pardon of a sinner is its most appropriate attendant?

III. As Joshua answers to our Lord in his name and in his clemency, so, too, does he in his mode of appointment. Moses chose Joshua, who had no claim or title to be chosen; he consecrated him, not in a legal, but in a Gospel, way; he prefigured in him the ministers of Christ and soldiers of His Church. Joshua was chosen, not by the will of men, but by the will of God.

IV. In a special way God's choice ended in Joshua. He did not receive it by inheritance, nor are heirs mentioned to whom he left it. He who divided the land by lot, who gave to each his portion to enjoy, is allotted in the sacred history neither wife,

nor children, nor choice possession. In this he was the type of the Lord Himself, who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich."

V. We read of no lamentation of friends, no special honours being paid to Joshua, at his death. He was buried neither by his sons nor by the assembled people, as if to teach us to raise up our hearts to Him for whom no mourning was to be made, for He was the living among the dead; and though for a while He laid Himself down in the grave, He did it that, there lying, He might quicken the dead by His touch, that so first He and then they all might rise again and live for ever.

VI. Joshua did not accomplish all the work that was to be done, but left a remnant to those who came after him. And so in like manner Christ has done the whole work of redemption for us, and yet it is no contradiction to say that something remains for us to do: we have to take the redemption offered to us, and that taking involves a work. He has suffered and conquered, and those who become partakers in Him undergo in their own persons the shadow and likeness of that great victory. We advance by yielding; we rise by falling; we conquer by suffering; we persuade by silence; we become rich by bountifulness; we gain comfort through mourning; we earn glory by penitence and prayer.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 150

Chap. xxiii., vers. 1-3.

JOSHUA and St. John stand out as if in direct hostility to each other. We know that the Book of Joshua must have been read by the Apostle in his childhood, his manhood, his old age. Let us inquire how at different times of his life he must have regarded it.

I. We find him first as a Galilean fisherman. At that time the book of the wars of the Lord may have had some attraction for him. He would receive it as coming from Divine authority, but there was nothing which bound it to his actual human sympathies. What was there in what he saw and heard that could make any Jew feel that he belonged to a chosen, vigorous, triumphant people?

II. It is a common notion, suggested by his own words, that the Apostle was a hearer and disciple of John the Baptist. The immediate appeal of John's preaching was undoubtedly to the individual conscience. Each man was awakened to a sense of his own evil. He wished, first of all, for a baptism for the remis-

sion of sins. Such a thought absorbs for a while a man's being. The disciples of John would not in general have found leisure to think of the Book of Joshua.

III. Another period came. John was called to be Christ's disciple. Christ said that He was come to establish a kingdom, and His followers were sure that He did not deceive them; and now all that they had heard in the old Scriptures of a kingdom that was to put down the tyrants and giants of the earth came to life in their minds. They would dwell on the battles of Joshua and David with an earnest delight, with a confidence that they were battles fought on their behalf, in the like of which they might one day be permitted to engage, with a prospect of a more complete and permanent victory.

IV. But there came a fourth stage in St. John's life. After he had leant upon his Lord's breast at the Last Supper and had stood beside His Cross, his strong belief in Christ as a Conqueror through suffering may for a time have made him unable to understand the triumph with which the old Israelite leader records the discomfiture and extinction of the Canaanitish hosts. But this feeling would be accompanied by two others: (1) with a distinct acknowledgment that Joshua's battles were tending to the establishment of a righteous kingdom upon earth; (2) that the Christian man is in as literal a sense a warrior as the Jew ever was.

V. In his old age, as he sat alone in the island of Patmos, may not St. John have found in the old leader of his country's hosts a teacher and a friend? He could learn from him that there is a Divine and gracious purpose in that which looks darkest and saddest: he was told that nations are not swept out of the earth for nothing, that the earth is God's, and that He will reclaim it from those who lay it waste and make it a den of robbers.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 305.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 8.—"Cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day."

I. IT could be only in a limited sense that this praise could be given to the children of Israel; their great crime through all periods of their history was that they did not cleave unto the Lord their God. But probably during that score of years which intervened between the entrance into Canaan and the death of Joshua the Hebrews were more true in their allegiance

to their heavenly King than at any other period. As yet they had everything to preserve them in their steadfastness, and there was no strength of temptation to allure them to rebellion. While Joshua lived they did cleave as fully as they ever cleaved to the Lord their God.

II. Our only safeguard in facing the snares and temptations, the malice and opposition, the craft and cunning, of the devil, the world, and the flesh is to cleave unto the Lord our God. "Keep innocency and take heed unto the thing that is right," and you will find the boldness of evil abashed and the designs of evil powerless before you. Cleave unto God quietly, but resolutely and consistently. "Take good heed to yourselves that ye *love* the Lord your God." *Fear* will never induce you to cleave to Him. Love will. And if you cleave unto the Lord, none shall be able to stand before you, or to gain the mastery over you.

F. E. PAGET, *Sermons for Special Occasions*, p. 115.

Chap. xxiii., vers. 11-15.—"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God," etc.

I. IN this speech Joshua once more presses upon the people their true character as the chosen people of the Lord God. He is able now to appeal to facts in evidence of the truth which had once been matters of faith; he is able now to point to what God has done, to call the people themselves to witness that all the promises of God have come to pass, and that not one good thing hath failed of all those which the Lord their God had promised them.

II. Joshua found in his old age nothing to retract of what he had said in former times concerning God and the people, and the relation of the one to the other. He next implores the people to guard against backsliding. He says: Go on as you have begun, and God will bless you; your shame, and misery, and damnation will be if you turn back from following the Lord.

III. Once more, looking forward to the future, Joshua declares that, in case of the Israelites going back from their high position as God's people, God would punish them as severely as hitherto He had blessed them bounteously. The possession of the land had been the reward of obedience; the loss of the same would be the punishment of disobedience.

All the points in Joshua's speech might be applied by a Christian minister to a Christian congregation. Consider: (1)

whether you are sufficiently alive to your high calling, and profession, and privileges; (2) whether you are guarding against backsliding in your religious course; (3) whether you think sufficiently of the danger of offending God and of the awfulness of that judgment-seat before which the living and the dead must alike one day stand.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 108.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 14.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 10th series, p. 256; A. Raleigh, *Thoughts for the Weary*, p. 81. xxiv. 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1718. xxiv. 9, 10.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. v., p. 407; H. Thompson, *Sermons for Sundays, Festivals, and Fasts*, 1st series, p. 26. xxiv. 13.—J. Vickery, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 133. xxiv. 14.—G. Woolnough, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 307. xxiv. 14, 15.—J. Hamilton, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 116.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 15.—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THESE were the brave and faithful words of a brave and faithful man—words that were brave as regards men, words that were brave as regards God. Joshua, the great leader of the army and the people of Israel, having won for them secure possession of the Promised Land, just before his approaching end, gathers the people together to tell them what is the only true condition on which they can continue to hold this land. He tells them that national prosperity and national safety depend upon national religion, and then, knowing the feeble nature of the people he is addressing, he tells the assembled multitude that they may make their choice, rejecting the worship of the Lord if it seemed to them evil to serve Him, but that as for him and for his, the choice was made, and made unalterably.

I. These words not only express a great and high purpose, but they express a great and an infinitely precious idea and fact: they express for us the idea of *family religion*, as distinct on the one hand from personal religion and on the other from national religion. They reveal to us the family as what in truth it is and what God designed it should be—the home and citadel of religious faith in the heart of the nation.

II. God has His great work for individuals to do. He places a Moses upon the mount to bring down the law. He sends a Paul out to preach the Gospel. He sends an Augustine to defend it, a Luther to reform it, and a Wesley to revive it. But mightier than all this, deeper than all this, though more hidden than this, is the task God confides to every religious and believing household upon earth. It is the task of taking the

seed that these great sowers of the word have sown and cherishing it beneath the tender, and gracious, and mighty influence of home. Such is God's will and God's purpose for the preservation of His faith. The family is its safe hiding-place, its true nursery, that none can invade or desecrate.

BISHOP MAGEE, *Sermon Preached in Peterborough Cathedral*, July 1st, 1880.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1229; J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 289; W. Anderson, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 309; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., pp. 423, 439, 456; J. Vaughan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 219; E. Irving, *Collected Writings*, vol. iii., pp. 217, 231; Bishop Walsham How, *Twenty-four Practical Sermons*, p. 250; *Sunday Magazine*, 1877, p. 88; R. Heber, *Parish Sermons*, pp. 435, 448; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 124; Parker, vol. v., p. 288; J. C. Hare, *Sermons in Herstmonceux Church*, p. 369; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 354.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 19.—**"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins."**

WE find here that Joshua offers a repulse to men who wish to avow themselves on the side of God. There is every ground for believing that he was under Divine direction, and as there was no evidence that the people were insincere in their promise, there must be some reason for the manner in which they are met.

I. This procedure on the part of God is not unusual. A number of instances might easily be found in the Bible of obstacles thrown in the way of men who offer themselves to the service of God. There are many terrible threatenings, many dreadful judgments against sin and sinners, which have in them all the language of the text. Many profess Christianity with far more irreverence than others keep aloof from it. There are thoughtful and self-distrustful natures which have long and deep shrinking because their eye has seen the purity of God and the poverty of self. Within certain limits the feeling is true and most becoming. It is God repeating in a humble heart the words of Joshua, "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God."

II. Having sought to show that this procedure on the part of God is not so unusual, we may now attempt to find some reasons for it. (1) It sifts the true from the false seeker. We refer here not to arriving at the profession of Christianity, but at the principle of it in the heart. The Gospel comes into the

world to be a touchstone of human nature, to be Ithuriel's spear among men. No one will be able to complain of any real wrong from these obstacles. The false seeker is not injured, because he never sincerely sought at all. The true seeker is not injured, for never was such a one disappointed. When the flickering phosphorescence glimmers out, the spark, although as faint as in the smoking flax, lives on and rises to a flame. (2) It leads the true seeker to examine himself more thoroughly. It is very good for a man, when he is in danger of too hasty acquiescence, that he should be compelled to examine himself both about his view of God's character in the pardon of sin, and what this requires of him in the way of self-surrender to God. (3) It binds a man to his profession by a stronger sense of consistency. God will beguile none of us into His service by false pretences. He tells us the nature of the work, what His own character gives Him a right to expect of us; then, if we still go forward, He can say, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord, to serve Him." (4) It educates us to a higher growth and greater capacity for happiness. If we are to rise to anything great in the spiritual life, it must be, not by soft, indulgent nurture, but by endurance of hardship and pressing on against repulse. The delay which Christians have in gaining a sense of acceptance with God arises often from making the sense of acceptance the main object of pursuit. But there is something higher: to serve God whether we have the sense of acceptance or no—to have this as the one great purpose of life and end of our being,—"Nay, but we will serve the Lord."

J. KER, *Sermons*, p. 56.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 19.—Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 48; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 274. xxiv. 24.—G. Woolnough, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 307. xxiv. 25.—W. Morley Punshon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 56; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 59. xxiv. 26, 27.—J. Foster, *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 396; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 63; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 408; Parker, vol. v., p. 289. xxiv. 19-29.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 399. xxiv. 29, 30.—J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 36. xxiv. 32.—J. Kennedy, *Sunday Magazine*, 1876, p. 810; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 299.

JUDGES.

Chaps. i. and ii.

THE character of Joshua is, like that of many soldiers, simple and easily understood. He was strong and of a good courage, a man, fit not only for battle, but for tedious campaigning; full of resources, and able to keep up the heart of a whole people by his hopeful bearing. It was one of the most difficult of tasks which was entrusted to Joshua. He was to lead the people through a series of the most brilliant and exciting military successes, and then to turn them to the most peaceful pursuits. It has been said of the Romans, that they conquered like savages and ruled like philosophic statesmen. The same transition had to be accomplished by Israel, and into the strong hand of Joshua was the delicate task committed.

I. But the work he did needs some justification. Many persons have been staggered by the slaughter of the Canaanites. No doubt the Canaanites were idolaters, but is this not to propagate religion by the sword? The key to this difficulty was given in the very first confirmation of the grant made to Abraham. When the land of Canaan was made over to him and his descendants, he was told that they could not at once enter on possession, "*because the iniquity of the Amorites was not full.*" The transference of territory was thus from the first viewed and treated as a judicial transaction. Between this and many other outwardly similar conquests there was all the difference which there is between a righteous execution, which rejoices the hearts of all good men, and murder, which makes us ashamed of our nature.

II. The new leader of Israel received a name which, by identifying his leadership with God's, gave constant promise of victory. Originally called Hoshea, or Salvation, this name was changed, when he led the spies, to Jehoshua, or the Lord is my Salvation. And it has never ceased to seem significant to the Christian that this name of Joshua should have been that by which our Lord was called. (1) We are, in the first place, reminded by this parallel that the help afforded to us in Christ

is God's help, and this in a fuller sense than was true in Israel's case. The Angel of the Lord was one person, and Joshua another. But in the person of Jesus Christ these two are one —the human Leader and divine Saviour. (2) We are reminded by this parallel that as in the conquest of the land by Joshua, so in our salvation, there is a somewhat perplexing mixture of miracle and hard fighting. (3) We see in this conquest to which Israel was led by Joshua, in what sense and to what extent we should look for present victory over sin. Joshua did not deal only in promises, and no one who is in earnest about sin will be put off with mere expectations of deliverance. The Saviour I need is one who can help me to-day, one who counts my present enemies His enemies, and who can communicate to me such real strength as shall make the difference between my being defeated and my conquering them. If you fall into sin that makes you doubt whether Christ is a present Saviour, there is really nothing else to say than this: You must win back again the ground you have lost.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 3.

Chap. i., ver. 7.—"As I have done, so God hath requited me."

I. As I have done, so God hath requited me—then the life of man cannot escape the judgment of God. Man may deny it, may theoretically disregard it, but cannot escape it.

II. As I have done, so God hath requited me—then let no man take the law into his own hands. We are to look at the *moral* workings of things, and to see in the results which are forced upon us, not the petty anger of man, but the holy and righteous judgment of God.

III. As I have done, so God hath requited me—then every good deed will be honoured with appropriate reward. Remember: (1) Good deeds are their own reward. (2) Deeds done merely for the sake of reward cannot be good.

IV. As I have done, so God hath requited me—then though justice be long delayed, yet it will be vindicated eventually.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 182 (see also *Pulpit Notes*, p. 133).

REFERENCES: i. 1.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 162. i. 7.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 16. i. 19, 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1690. i. 27-36.—Parker, vol. v., p. 313. i.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 51. i. etc.—G. Gilfillan, *Alpha and Omega*, vol. ii., p. 179.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-5.—"And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim," etc.

THIS is clearly an incident to arrest our attention and to arouse our curiosity. Let us inquire: (1) Who this angel was? (2) What the meaning of "Gilgal" and "Bochim" is; and (3) What significancy may lie in that apparently meaningless ascent of the heavenly visitant from Gilgal to Bochim.

I. Most commentators recognise in this angel the uncreated angel of the covenant, even the second person of the Blessed Trinity. This "Angel" uses words which are emphatically the words of God Himself and of no lesser being.

II. Gilgal was the first camp of Israel after Jordan was actually crossed, it was at once a goal and a starting-point. To Christians it represents that position of vantage, that excellence of endowment whence they go forth in obedience and faith to subdue their spiritual foes. Bochim was the place of weepers—the place of mere feelings, emotions, idle fears, barren sorrow, unavailing regret.

III. The visit of the angel to reproach us should teach us to make a vigorous move, to break up from Bochim, and make Gilgal once more our headquarters. Sentimental regrets, self-bewailing tears, barren religious emotions, only divert attention from real remedies and practical duties.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 59.

I. THE sin of Israel, here reproved, consisted in their not thoroughly driving out the inhabitants of the land and throwing down their altars. Christ bids His people mortify their members which are on the earth. Come out and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. For generally we have no definite plan of life at all. Hence vacillation, fitfulness, inconsistency, excess and deficiency, by turns. The opportunity of setting up a high standard and aim is lost, and soon, amid the snares of worldly conformity, we sigh for the day of our visitation, when we might have started from a higher platform and run a higher race than we can now hope ever to realise.

II. Consider the inexcusableness of the sin in question. Look back to the past and call to mind from what a state the Lord has rescued you, at what a price, by what a work of power. Look around on your present circumstances, see how the Lord has performed all that he swore to your fathers; the land is yours, and it is a goodly land. And if, in looking forward to the future, you have any misgivings, has He not said, "I will

never break My covenant with you." What can you ask more? A past redemption, a present possession, and a covenant never to be broken. Are these considerations not sufficient to bind you to the whole work and warfare of the high calling of God, and to make cowardice and compromise exceeding sinful.

III. Consider the dangerous and disastrous consequences of the sin in question. Hear the awful sentence of God: "They shall be as thorns in your sides," etc. (verse 3), and then see how the children of Israel lift up their voice and weep. The golden opportunity is lost, their error is not to be retrieved, its bitter fruits are to be reaped from henceforth many days.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p 155.

REFERENCES: ii. 1-5.—J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 185.

Chap. ii., ver. 4.—"And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept."

I. OBSERVE, first, that the reprover of the people is termed "an angel." "An angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal." But the first utterance carries us to the thought of One higher than angel or archangel. The speaker describes Himself as the deliverer of Israel out of Egypt, and He finishes with the denunciation, "Ye have not obeyed My voice." The coming up from Gilgal seems to connect at once the prophet of Bochim with Joshua's vision of the Captain of the Lord's host. In this place and in many others, we have a previous manifestation of the second person of the Trinity in the form of the manhood which in the latter days He was about to take into God. We here see the eternal Word in one of His three great offices, viz., that of prophet or teacher. The burden of His prophecy is worthy of the Divine speaker, for it is the simple enunciation of the fundamental truth of all religion—man in covenant with God, and bound to comply with the terms of that covenant.

II. Consider the result of the prophesying. The general result was but transitory. The people wept and sacrificed unto the Lord. But no amendment ensued. The whole effect was a momentary outburst of feeling and a hasty sacrifice. Most true picture of the reception of the word of God in after time. It is sensational or emotional religion against which Bochim is our warning. There are two principal elements of this fruitless sorrow. The first is want of depth of soul. The second is the "after revolt of the human mind against the supernatural."

Godly sorrow issues in a repentance not to be repented of, in that thorough turning of the life to God's service, from which, in the hottest fire of temptation, there is never a turning back to the way of evil again.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Oxford Lent Sermons*, 1870, p. 63.

REFERENCES: ii. 4, 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1680. ii. 18.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 162. ii.—*Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 324. iii. 4.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 163. iii. 9, 10.—*Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 333. iii. 15.—*Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 339. iii. 16.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 16. iii. 20.—T. Guthrie, *Sunday Magazine*, 1873, p. 281; T. Cartwright, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 125. iii. 31.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 47; Parker, vol. v., p. 344; T. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 21. iv. 1-24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 279. iv. 8.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 64. iv. 8, 9.—S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 99. iv. 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 273.

Chap. iv., ver. 21.—"Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died."

JAEL appears to us as a hateful murderess; our feeling towards her is one of horror and indignation. Yet in the Bible she is extolled as amongst the noblest of heroes. The question is, what vindication can be offered for her conduct? If Jael received Sisera into her tent with the intention of murdering him, she must be left to the execrations of posterity.

But there are plain and straightforward reasons from which to infer that Jael had no design of killing Sisera; that she acted therefore with perfect honesty, and not with atrocious duplicity, when she offered him shelter. The action was too perilous; it required too much of more than masculine hardihood, or rather ferocity, even if there had been the strongest inducements; whereas there appears to have been no inducement at all, but rather the reverse, and we add to this, that since you have only the silence of Jael when she was asked by Sisera to tell a lie in his cause, the probability is that she had a reverence for truth; and if so she must have meant what she said when she gave the invitation and the promise, "Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not."

II. What were the motives which instigated Jael in putting to death her slumbering guest? We reckon it a satisfactory explanation of her conduct and one which removes every

difficulty, that she was led by a Divine impulse or in obedience to a Divine command, to take away Sisera's life. It is true we are not told, as in the case of Abraham, that God commanded the action, but we are told that God approved the action. And since the action in itself, independent of His command, would have been a flagrant offence, we necessarily infer that what He approved He also directed.

III. There is a third question which suggests itself here. Granting that Jael acted on a Divine command, how could it be consistent with the character of God to issue such a command? Since murder is a crime which is expressly forbidden, with what propriety could He enjoin its perpetration? The answer is, that no one would have felt surprised had Sisera perished in battle. He was the oppressor of the Lord's people; what marvel, then, that he should be overtaken by vengeance?

Jael was but the executioner directed by God to slay a condemned criminal, and can we charge her with blood-guiltiness because she did not refuse to obey that direction. She had a hard task to perform, one demanding faith and dependence on God, but she performed it without flinching, and she deserves our admiration as a mighty heroine.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1677.

REFERENCES: iv. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 337. iv. 23.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 51. iv.-v.—Parker, vol. v., p. 348. v.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 133; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 38; M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 173.

Chap. v., vers. 1, 2.—"Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves."

I. A PERSON who thinks that a Divine lesson-book should present to us exclusively or chiefly high maxims of morality, or perfect models of character and behaviour, finds the Book of Judges a great stumbling-block. There the tribes of Israel are exhibited, not as specimens of excellence, but as disorganised and barbarous; in strife with each other, and with the nations round about. The very champions who rose up in their defence seem to indulge their vices in a more gigantic way than their fellow-men.

We must remember this: God calls these men out that they may act as His servants, as deliverers of their country, as bene-

factors to mankind. So far as they yield themselves to that calling, God speaks in them and shines through them; men see His image and are raised by it to know what they are meant to be. So soon as these men begin to act and speak for themselves, to use the strength or the wisdom which God has given them on their own behalf, to set themselves up as heroes or tyrants separate from their brethren, that moment they become witnesses for God by their rebellion as they had been by their obedience; making evident the truth of their assertion that He governs the world, since if these His servants governed it without Him, they would soon make a desert of it.

II. In this fifth chapter we have this very puzzle brought before us. Deborah is an inspired woman, yet she praises the murderess Jael. The Bible does not itself applaud this act; it tells us frankly that Deborah the prophetess applauded it. At that instant all other thoughts were absorbed in joy for the rescue which she ascribed to its true source. We must not allow our reverence for Deborah to interfere with our reverence for God. We must not insist that she is right when she contradicts law-givers, prophets, apostles, and the Son of God. Since the Son of God has been manifested, the works of the devil have been manifested also; it is a monstrous contempt of God's teaching to say that we cannot know them; an awful denial of it to say that in certain instances we may identify them with His works who has come to destroy them.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 320.

REFERENCE: v. 2.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 229.

Chap. v., vers. 7, 8.—"The villages ceased, they ceased in Israel . . . then there was war in the gates."

I. PERHAPS the general idea of a village in the Bible was of a cluster of unwalled huts or houses, without a synagogue; but we may be sure that in most such places, although the priest and the building were not there, there was divine service, the knowledge of God, and the calling upon His name. A religious atmosphere invests the villages of the Bible; human life everywhere is compelled to look up, saved from looking down, from regarding life as a hopeless, grinding fate; the life of the villager is charmed from injustice, oppression, and fraud, by Divine principles taking shape in laws and enactments. God revealed Himself first to villages and villagers. The

patriarchs were villagers; the great thoughts of the men who from time to time roused the nation, were born in villages, and the first notes of the Incarnation sounded over the plain in villagers' ears.

II. Almost all the most beautiful imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures clusters round the scenery of village life; the land was full of pictures, on which faith was invited to meditate.

III. The villages of the Bible illustrate this lesson, that national wealth is not in the Divine conception the chief end and purpose of any nation. In the denunciations pronounced on Egypt and Tyre and Babylon, we learn how great, in God's judgment, is the difference between a wealthy and a happy land.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 31.

REFERENCES: v. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 763. v. 12.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., No. 340. v. 16.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 164; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 133. v. 20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 352; E. J. Hardy, *Faint yet Pursuing*, p. 85.

Chap. v., ver. 23.—"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

I. MANY persons would say that this curse was merely a splenetic utterance of an angry woman against a town. And yet that curse was carried out completely. If then in wrath God doomed a city to punishment, yet even in that doom there is mercy, for in the curse pronounced by Deborah there was a warning to the inhabitants of the city to return from their faithlessness.

II. What, then, was the reason of the curse pronounced on Meroz? Of what was Meroz guilty? (1) The omission of a plain and positive duty. They did not join with the enemy, but they refused to help the people of God. (2) A sin of lukewarmness and carelessness. (3) Meroz let slip an opportunity; neglected a crisis in her history.

III. From the conduct of the people of Meroz we may take three great warnings: (1) Against sins of omission. (2) Against the sin of lukewarmness. (3) Against the letting slip of opportunities.

C. HOOK, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 42.

NOTICE, first of all, that the sin for which Meroz is cursed is pure inaction. There are in all our cities a great multitude

of useless men and of men perfectly contented with their uselessness. Consider some of the various points which uselessness assumes.

I. The first source of the uselessness of good men is moral cowardice. The vice is wonderfully common. The fear is concentrated on no individual, but is there not a sense of hostile or contemptuous surroundings that lies like a chilling hand upon what ought to be the most exuberant and spontaneous utterance of life? Men do not escape from their cowardice by having it proved to them that it is a foolish thing to be afraid. Nothing but the knowledge of God's love, taking such possession of a man that his one wish and thought in life is to glorify and serve God, can liberate him from, because it makes him totally forget, the fear of man.

II. The second cause of uselessness is false humility. Humility is good when it stimulates, it is bad when it paralyses, the active powers of a man. If conscious weakness causes a man to believe that it makes no difference whether he works or not, then his humility is his curse. Remember: (1) that man judges by the size of things, God judges by their fitness; (2) that small as you think you are, you are the average size of moral and intellectual humanity; (3) that such a humility as yours comes, if you get at its root, from an over-thought about yourself, an over-sense of your own personality, and so is closely akin to pride.

III. The third cause of uselessness is indolence. There is only one permanent escape from indolence and self-indulgence; the grateful and obedient dedication to God through Christ, which makes all good work, all self-sacrifice, a privilege and joy instead of a hardship, since it is done for Him.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 287.

I. THE sin of Meroz was that it was found wanting on a great occasion, as it could not have been found wanting had it been sound at heart. (1) It failed first of all in the duty of patriotism. (2) It failed in duty towards its religion. For the cause of Israel against Jabin was not merely the cause of the country; it was the cause of the Church.

II. Meroz is never unrepresented in history. "Curse ye Meroz." The words still live. May they not be heard within the soul when a man has consciously declined that which conscience has recognised as a plain duty? A deliberate

rejection of duty cannot but destroy, or at least impair most seriously, the clearness of our mental vision.

H. P. LIDDON, *University Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 264.

REFERENCES: v. 23.—W. BAIRD, *The Hallowing of our Common Life*, p. 70; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 289; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 335.

Chap. v., ver. 24.—"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Hebe the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

THE main interest of this narrative lies with a woman. Deborah is one of the most striking figures in Jewish history. She was the leader and guide of her countrymen in the effort which restored to them peace and freedom, civil and religious. She was the judge who awarded praise or blame to those who had been false or true to the cause of God and of Israel. At the close of her song she utters an emphatic and extraordinary blessing upon Jael.

I. Jael's action on the one hand, and Deborah's inspired judgment on the other, raise questions to which no reflecting mind can be insensible. (1) We cannot get over the difficulty by saying that Deborah's utterance about Jael is not inspired; that it is only a page of dark human passion occurring in a generally inspired poem. If Deborah's blessing of Jael is uninspired, it is hard to claim inspiration reasonably for any part of her song; and if Deborah's song is not inspired, it is difficult to say what other portions of the Book of Judges are. (2) In weighing Deborah's language, we have to consider, first of all, that Sisera's life was, in Deborah's judgment, rightly forfeited. She speaks of him as the Lord's enemy. And what Deborah knew about him, Jael knew also. Neither of them had any doubt that his life was justly forfeited. The question could only arise as to Jael's method of taking it. (3) Let us notice that Deborah's language about Jael is relative language. It is relative to the conduct of other persons than Jael, and it is relative to Jael's own circumstances as a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Jael was blessed among "women in the tent," women, that is, who led such a life as that of the wandering Arabs beyond the confines of Israel. Deborah contrasts the poor heathen woman of the desert with the recreant sailors of Asher and Dan, and the herdsmen of Reuben, and the townsmen of Meroz. She projects Jael's fervid loyalty into luminous prominence, where it stands out in telling rebuke to the indifference of those who had far greater advantages.

II. Notice three points in conclusion. (1) The equitableness of Deborah's judgment of Jael. (2) Note that this history would be sorely misapplied, if we were to gather from it that a good motive justifies any action that is known to be bad. Jael is only eulogised because she lived in an age and circumstances which exonerated what was imperfect or wrong in her act. (3) Note the presence of unsuspected imperfections in all human endeavour even when God graciously accepts it.

H. P. LIDDON, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 65 (see also *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1159).

REFERENCES: v. 24.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 57; J. B. Mozley, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, pp. 126, 153; Bishop Woodford, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 161; J. Percival, *Some Helps for School Life*, p. 124.

Chap. v., 31.—"So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

WHAT the Old Testament especially teaches us is this, that zeal is as essentially a duty of all God's rational creatures as prayer and praise, faith and submission; and surely, if so, especially of sinners whom He has redeemed. That zeal consists in a strict attention to His commands, an intense thirst for the advancement of His glory, a carelessness of obloquy or reproach or persecution, a forgetfulness of friend and relative, nay, hatred (so to say) of all that is naturally dear to us, when He says, "Follow me." A certain fire of zeal, showing itself not by force and blood, but as really and certainly as if it did, is a duty of Christians in the midst of all that excellent overflowing charity which is the highest Gospel grace, and the fulfilling of the second table of the Law.

I. Of course it is absolutely sinful to have any private enemies. When David speaks of hating God's enemies, it was under circumstances when keeping friends with them would have been a desertion of the truth. We hate sinners by putting them out of our sight as if they were not, by annihilating them in our affections. But in no case are we to allow ourselves resentment or malice.

II. It is quite compatible with the most earnest zeal to offer kind offices to God's enemies when in distress. God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

III. The Christian keeps aloof from sinners in order to do them good. He does so in the truest and most enlarged charity.

A true friend is he who speaks out, and when a man sins, shows him that he is displeased at the sin. The Psalmist speaks in this spirit when after praying God to persecute the ungodly with His tempest, he adds "fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Thy name, O Lord."

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 173.

REFERENCE: v. 31.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 411.

Chaps. vi., vii., viii.

IN the first words of Gideon we find the key to his character. (1) He was a man who felt deeply the degradation of his people. He could not enjoy his own harvest while the Midianites were robbing all around; he had the patriot's wide sympathy. (2) He was a man also of the strongest common sense, accustomed to look through words to things, and to look the facts of life fair in the face. (3) He was a man of abundant personal valour, but yet unwilling to move a step until he was sure that God was with him.

I. We cannot fully understand Gideon's attitude towards the work of God, without taking into account the fact that the first thing he was commanded to do was to hew down the altar of Baal which had been erected in his father's grounds. God could not come among them while they were all turned away from Him to Baal. No sooner had Gideon hewed down the altar of Baal, than he received his commission against Midian. Gideon was right in refusing to believe God was present if things went on just as if He were not present, but he was wrong in not seeing what it was that prevented God from being present.

II. Gideon's attitude towards God's work, though not satisfactory, was due not so much to a flaw in his spirit, as to a mental blindness to duty. This could be, and was, easily amended. But the narrator goes on to show that there are other attitudes which men assume, and which unfit them for doing anything for God in the world. Much untrustworthy material existed in his army. The cowards had first to be rejected.

III. Out of the 10,000 men who were left, only 300 had that eagerness for the work that kept them from paying undue regard to other things. Men who are steeped in their own worldly objects are not the men whom God will use for His work.

IV. A fourth attitude is illustrated by the conduct of Ephraim. The Ephraimites may have been either high spirited and vexed that they had not been invited to help in overthrowing the Midianites, or they may have only wished that they had a share in the glory, and tried to make it appear that they would gladly have joined Gideon. There are both these classes still, persons who really feel hurt if they are not asked to help in every good work, and persons who when a good work is in its infancy make no movement to join it, but as soon as it becomes popular come forward and loudly complain that they were never asked to join.

V. A fifth and last attitude which men frequently assume towards God's work is represented by the men of Succoth and Penuel. These men were blind to the glory of the common cause—selfish, poor spirited creatures, that shut themselves up in their fenced cities, and were satisfied to let God's soldiers starve, and God's work come to an end for want of support, so long only as they had bread enough to satisfy their own hunger. Such persons must be taught not by expostulation, but by the sword and with the briers of the wilderness.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 31.

REFERENCES: vi.-viii.—Parker, vol. vi., pp. 2, 49; J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 194. vi. 11.—J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 313. vi. 11-13.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 171. vi. 11-24.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 375. vi. 14.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 27; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 275; J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 130. vi. 19.—J. W. Atkinson, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1052. vi. 22-24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1679. vi. 25-32.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 376. vi. 33-40.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 377.

Chap. vi., vers. 36-40.—"Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said," etc.

I. GIDEON asked the Lord for a sign, thus showing that there was in him that caution and waiting, for the want of which many a man has mistaken his mission, and instead of doing the work of the Lord, has wrecked both himself and his own work. "If Thou wilt save Israel by my hand." A full consciousness that Israel needs saving, but an indisposition to feel that such an honour could be bestowed on him; such is a good index to the character of a man, a disposition to test ourselves. We

do well to apply tests to ourselves and to our position; to our religious life, and to our relation to God by our religious life.

II. We can justify the Gideon test. Upon the heart and the home the dew will fall and remain. If we ask, Am I a child of God? we shall know by the dew on our hearts.

III. The world will insist on applying its test to us; the world will watch for the dew on our fleece. Gratitude in the heart, holiness in the life are dew.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Sermons*, p. 430.

REFERENCES: vi. 36-40.—J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 81; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 295. vi. 38-40.—C. J. Vaughan, *Good Words*, 1872, p. 745. vii. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 387. vii. 1-8.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 379.

Chap. vii., vers. 5-7.—"So he brought down the people unto the water," etc.

AMONG the ten thousand soldiers in Gideon's army there were three hundred brave and wary men who, even under the pangs of thirst, could not forget that they were in the presence of an enemy, and that it behoved them therefore to be on the alert. Instead of flinging themselves recklessly on the ground, they simply scooped up a little water in the hollow of their hands, and lapped it or sipped it, even as a dog laps while he runs—on the watch for any ambush, prepared for any surprise. These were the veterans of the little army, men who had seen war before and knew its perils, and felt how much even a moment's carelessness might cost them. And these were the men, marked out by their own wariness and self-control, by whom God meant to save Israel from its foes. God's way was a wise way, (1) from a military, (2) from a moral point of view. God is a jealous God who wants all the glory of His acts, of His achievements for Himself, and will not share that glory with another. It was because He wanted to do good to the children of Israel, that He made it plain to them that it was He who had saved them, and not they themselves.

I. This, then, is the moral of Gideon's story: that God wants to rule over us only that He may save us; or, to put it in another way, God wants us to know that it is He who has saved us, and that He will go on serving and saving us to the end. The lesson taught by the three hundred is the necessity of self-control. Self-control is required at every moment, along

the whole range of our habits, and through the whole course of our life.

II. Our counsel to you is, hold yourselves well in hand. Be masters of yourselves, of all your appetites, and of all your desires. Sip the water or the wine of life, like the three hundred. Do not fling yourselves on your knees to it, and drink as if your only business in life was to get your fill of pleasure or of gain.

III. Learn from the three hundred to keep a high and noble aim steadfastly before you, an aim which must be pursued, if need be, at the cost of appetite and desire; and let that aim be the highest of all, viz., the love and service of God.

S. Cox, *The Bird's Nest*, p. 148.

REFERENCE: vii. 5-7.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 25.

Chap. vii., ver. 7.—"And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."

I. CONSIDER the man to whom the angel came. His thoughts had been busy with God before God came to him. He was a man who meditated much on the promises and the histories of God's grace and love. The Lord ever comes to those whose hearts are watching for Him.

II. To understand verses 2-7 we must remember that the victory was to be a victory of faith. The battle was to be won against overwhelming numbers. The Lord needed men in whom spirit should be dominant, who could hold the flesh in habitual and iron control. Faint with their long march, the great body of men flung themselves on the ground, forgetful alike of toil and pain and glorious enterprise, in the cool draught which for the moment was exquisite delight. Three hundred men stood up above the prostrate throng. They stooped for a moment and lapped the few needful drops from the hollow of their hands, and then stood prompt to pursue their way. The eye of God marked them. "Set these men apart; these three hundred are strong enough for the stress of the battle, and great enough to wear the honours of the victory."

III. The lessons of the narrative are these: (1) It is the small matters which reveal us, the slight occasions. It is easy to catch the excitement of battle. Watch the combatant home, and you see the man. (2) There is One watching us when we are most unconscious, drawing silently auguries of character and forecasting destiny. (3) Keep your knee for God alone.

These men bent the knee to sensual good. Kneel to God, and it will cure you of all other kneeling.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 202.

REFERENCES: vii. 7.—J. Kelly, *Pulpit Trees*, p. 222. vii. 9-25.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 380. vii. 13.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 77; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. iii., p. 372. vii. 13, 14.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 265; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1873.

Chap. vii., ver. 16.—"Empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers."

GIDEON went down into the battle with only three hundred men, with only trumpets, pitchers and lights for weapons, and the mighty hosts of Amalek and Midian fled before him, and were driven from the land. More than a thousand years afterwards St. Paul remembered this story, and said: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." St. Paul was writing of the sufferings which he and his fellow-workers had to endure. He and they seemed no better than earthen pitchers, but they were vessels carrying a Divine light, a life kindled by God, and a power which could not be destroyed.

I. This story brings the happy assurance to every heart who hears it, that even a child may be a vessel to carry the power of God. God can fill the weakest and most fragile with power for His work. He asks only that the heart shall receive His life.

II. More wonderful still, this is a picture of our dear Lord. He also, as a man, was but an earthen vessel. His enemies broke the vessel which contained His life, but by their cruelty they brought defeat and shame to themselves, and glory to Him.

A. MACLEOD, *The Gentle Heart*, p. 257.

THE text illustrates the twofold elements of which man is composed, the material and the spiritual.

I. The mortal and material part of man is considered under the emblem of a pitcher containing within it a lamp or firebrand. (1) The first point of resemblance is that the pitcher is made of potter's clay, even as man was formed of the dust of the ground. (2) The pitcher's manufacture is brittle and easily shattered, and in this particular especially the comparison holds good between the earthen vessel and the body. (3) Notice, as a final point of comparison, the untransparent character of the earthen vessel. It is not adapted to the exhibition of a lamp.

II. Consider the light within the pitcher, the soul or immaterial part of man enclosed for the present within a material framework, the "breath of lives" breathed into the vessel of clay. (1) Animal life; a great distinction is to be drawn between the body, which is material, and the life of the body, which is immaterial. (2) Rational life; the life of the intellect. (3) There was a yet higher life breathed into man at the creation—spiritual life. Each of these lives is in some sense a lamp.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 181.

REFERENCES: vii. 16.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 273. vii. 18.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 54. vii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 264; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 413. vii.-viii. 1-21.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 145. viii. 1.—*Ibid.*, p. 382. viii. 2.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 265.

Chap. viii., ver. 4.—"Faint, yet pursuing."

I. FAINTNESS comes to the body by long travel. These men had come a considerable distance, and distance will vanquish the strongest in the end, if there is not adequate renewal of the strength by food and rest.

It is so with the soul. There is a mysterious spending of its substance and vitality day by day in thought, emotion, will, effort. And if, through long travel, the waste is more than the recruiting, then comes faintness. God takes forty, fifty, sixty years for the ripening of one soul. He takes seven, three, or only one for the perfecting of another. No man can measure God's work clearly in the soul of another, or even in his own.

II. Faintness comes to the body by rapid movement. These men had come fast as well as far. All earnest natures tend to go by rapid movements, and are in consequence subject to sudden exhaustion. The fainting is the natural fruit of the effort.

III. Faintness comes to the body by the difficulty of the ground that has been trodden, or of the work that has been done. Some Christians go to heaven by the way of the plain, and some by the mountain roads. The mountain men are often faint, and hardly "pursuing."

IV. Faintness comes to the body through lack of sustenance. The soul, like the body, will faint if it is famished. Jesus *feeds* His flock like a shepherd.

V. Faintness may come to the body by sickness, by disease.

The soul sickens and grows faint when in any way, in any place, it inhales the poison of sin.

The grand word of the text is "pursuing." To pursue in weakness is even better, in some senses, than to pursue in strength. It shows that the life-purpose has taken full possession of the soul, and that God Himself is inspiring it.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 163.

REFERENCES: viii. 4.—J. Baldwin Brown, *The Higher Life*, p. 288; E. J. Hardy, *Faint yet Pursuing*, p. 31; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*; 1st series, p. 83; Parker, vol. vi., p. 165. viii. 12, 17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 391. viii. 20.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 165; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 80. viii. 28.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 393.

Chap. viii., ver. 21.—"As the man is, so is his strength."

THE purport of these words is not obscure. The desert chieftains meant that, since they must die, they would rather fall by the hand of a strong man and a great commander such as Gideon, than by the hand of a mere stripling like his son; and that, first, because his stout arm would be more likely to despatch them quickly, and save them from a lingering and painful death; and secondly, because such an end would be less ignominious. Like many a wise saw of the olden time, the text contains much truth in small bulk.

I. Plainly, the first meaning of it is, that as a man is *physically*, so is his strength. Gideon belonged to the order of nature's nobility. He was a man of splendid figure and bearing, of a tall and commanding presence. Whatever work he undertook, he would do with thoroughness and effect. Although it is true that men cannot give to themselves a handsome mien, or add one cubit to their stature, it is equally true that they can do much to promote their health, to build up their constitution, and even to give dignity to their physical presence. The axiom generally holds good that as the man is, even in outward physique, so is his success and strength.

II. Take it in another way: as a man is *intellectually*, so is his strength. I use the word "strength" here as meaning power of work, capacity for accomplishing the ends of life, and making the world the better for his existence. In real power of work the skilled artisan leaves the mere labourer far behind, and the thoughtful clerk the mere mechanical penman; so that as a man is in intelligence, so is his strength.

III. As a man is *morally* and *spiritually*, so is his strength.

Character and faith, more than anything else, determine your power of overcoming difficulty and of accomplishing good. There must be a foundation of stern principle, or you will be as weak as water. A man with a resolute conscience will always be a power. There is no strength in the world like the strength imparted by a faith which lays hold of the risen and all-sufficient Redeemer.

J. THAIN DAVIDSON, *The City Youth*, p. 69.

REFERENCES: viii. 21.—E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 264. viii. 22-35 and ix.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 303.

Chap. ix., vers. 8-15.—"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us," etc.

I. FROM the answer of the olive tree we learn that usefulness is better than honour. Usefulness, if it be of the higher kind, is attained through long growing and long striving. But when it is attained, when there is a normal regulated usefulness flowing steadily out of a man's life, when he serves God and man where he is and by what he is, the offer of promotion ought to carry with it some very strong and clear enforcements to induce him to think of acceptance.

II. Notice, next, the answer of the fig tree. Sweetness is the one quality which the fig tree felt that it possessed. There is in some human souls a sweetness which imparts a fig tree flavour to the whole life. When you meet one who possesses this gift moving about among rough ways and persons, consider that you see something far more than merely pleasant, something of exceeding value to the world.

III. The vine can do only one thing—it can bear clusters of grapes. But that one thing is of force and value enough to keep the vine steady under temptation. "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" As there are some human lives with sweetness in them as their main element, so there are some with this brighter, racier quality, which "cheers" and animates the spirits of others. Be a vine if you can be nothing more; distil and distribute the wine of life.

IV. Society, in all its sections, is full of bramble men, who are striving for every sort of personal elevation and advantage. By the picture in this parable I want you to scorn the principles

they act upon, and to know that, by God's grace, you stand on a moral elevation far above them.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 132.

THE youngest son of Gideon, Jotham, seems to have inherited the hereditary wit of the family, so conspicuous in Gideon and in his father. He must also have inherited his father's cool courage and daring; a courage which enabled him to collect his thoughts in the midst of imminent danger, and to utter them in circumstances which would have caused the voice of most men to tremble.

I. The fable requires little explanation. It was meant to be, and it is, self-interpreting. We see, too, that it is a felicitous condensation of the principle which regulates the acceptance of many of the high honours and rewards of life. It will not do for every one to say with the fig tree, should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? It is important to recognise on the one hand, that we cannot decline all honour, and ought not to shrink from advancement in life; and on the other hand, we must recognise that it may be humility, but it may also be selfish love of ease, which prompts us to say, Should I leave my fatness and my sweetness and go to be promoted over the trees?

II. A still wider application of the fable will occur to any one who carefully reads it. For what strikes the reader most is perhaps the sagacious contentment of the olive, the fig, and the vine—a contentment and dread of change, which reproach us for our restlessness and craving to be always bettering ourselves. (1) The "fatness" which the olive was not disposed to forsake in exchange for high position, may very naturally be supposed to symbolise the unselfishness which belongs to many obscure positions in life. (2) Again, many lives are soured and rendered wretched to all connected with them, because it is not recognised that sweetness is that to which they are specially called. Few seem to understand the power of sweetness in persuading men, or, if they understand it, cannot control or humble themselves to use it.

III. A third lesson which we gather from this fable is how contemptible a thing is display and worldly honour, and what is called style. There is something better in life than mere show or the mere attainment of the rewards accorded by the world to its successful men. The real value of human life does not lie on the surface, lies indeed so deep that many people never see

it at all. If a man will only humbly accept what comes to him, and strive to do good as he has opportunity, he will not lack the blessing of God, but will be like the vine that cheereth God and man.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 61.

REFERENCES: ix. 8-15.—S. Cox, *Expositor's Note-book*, p. 64; S. Goebel, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 9; Parker, vol. vi., p. 51. ix. 48.—*Ibid.*, p. 166; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, p. 270.

Chap. x., vers. 6—xii., vers. 7.

I. As is frequently the case, the chief interest and instructiveness of Jephthah's career gather round that event in his life which, to himself and his contemporaries, might seem to mar its symmetry and destroy its usefulness. It is the great blunder of his life, his unfortunate vow, which unceasingly draws back men's attention to him. Through all his nature he was moved in prospect of the approaching battle. It made him thoughtful, concentrated, grave. He felt more than usually thrown back upon God's help and so, according to his light, he vowed a vow. As we have no distinct evidence regarding Jephthah's state of mind in making his vow, it is the part of charity to believe that though he was incomprehensibly rash in the terms of his vow, yet he was justified in vowing to make some offering to God should He deliver the Ammonites into his hand.

II. Supposing him to have been right in making the vow, was he right in keeping it? There is an obvious distinction between a promise made to God and a promise made to man. God can never wish a man to fulfil a contract which involves sin. By the very discovery of the sinfulness of a vow the maker of it is absolved from performing it. God shrinks much more than we can do from the perpetration of sin. Both parties fall from the agreement.

III. It has often been urged that Jephthah did *not* keep his vow, but compromised the matter by causing his daughter to take a vow of virginity, to become a nun, in fact. This seems to sacrifice the plain and obvious interpretation of the narrative. In verse 39 we are plainly informed that her father did with her according to the vow which he had vowed. Why did she ask for the one favour of two months to bewail her virginity if she was to have thirty or forty years with leisure for that purpose? And lastly, if the mere fact of her remaining unmarried fulfilled even that part of the vow which specified that

she was to be the Lord's, a stronger foundation need not be sought for the establishment of nunneries.

IV. We can scarcely help thinking that while the sacrifice itself was horrible, her spirit, the spirit of the sacrifice, was acceptable to God, and what she did through reverence and dutiful submission to her father, was accepted by Him.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 91.

REFERENCES: x. 16.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 167. x.-xii. 7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 453. x. 22.—J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 235. x.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 61. x.-xii.—Parker, *Pulpit Notes*, p. 273. xi. 7.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 167. xi. 30, 31.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 132. xi. 34-36.—M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 90. xi. 35.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Lent to Passiontide*, p. 328; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1341. xi.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 71. xii. 6.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 269. xii.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 85.

Chaps. xiii., xvi.

I. WE must first ask what principles, regarding the way in which God works deliverance for man, were taught by Samson. (1) The first principle impressed on the minds of his contemporaries must have been, that, "in a state of universal depression, all must ultimately depend on the indomitable strength which is aroused in individuals." Samson was qualified by his natural gifts to stand alone, and to hearten the people, and give them more courageous and hopeful thoughts. His name, Samson, refers not to his strength but to his temper. It means "sunny." (2) A second principle illustrated by the life of Samson is, that God has often to deliver His people in spite of themselves. This was impressed on the minds of all observant persons by the fact that the Israelites, instead of flocking to Samson's standard and seconding his effort to throw off the Philistine yoke, bound him and gave him up into the hands of the Philistines. They would not strike a blow in defence of their own liberty, still less in defence of their own champion. (3) A third principle illustrated by Samson's career is, that the greatest deliverances are wrought by self-sacrifice; "the dead which Samson slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

II. Another important inquiry is, What was it that constituted Samson's strength? (1) His strength was not the natural physical strength that accompanies a powerful frame and well-developed muscle. (2) Neither did his strength or success consist in his skill in the use of his weapons or choice of the

most effective weapons. (3) Samson's strength required to be sustained by the ordinary means of life. (4) Samson's strength abode with him so long as he was faithful to his Nazarite vow, and departed as soon as, for the sake of a fleshly lust, he departed from that vow and put himself into the power of Delilah and the enemies of the God of Israel. (5) God returned to Samson and gave him back his strength. There is no better instance of the use God can make of the wreck of an ill-spent life.

M. DODS, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 119.

REFERENCE : xiii. 8.—H. Hopwood, *Sermons for Sundays, Festivals, and Fasts*, 1st series, p. 128.

Chap. xiii., ver. 9.—"And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field," etc.

THE name Zorah means "the hornet's nest." It was a village of the tribe of Dan on a crag of the spur of a long mountain chain, high up amidst the cliffs. The place had a fame for the powers of mischief it possessed in sheltering or in sending forth the foes of those who were the enemies of Israel.

I. Look first, at the country of Samson. Dan was the extreme northern point in the territory of Israel. It was the last retreat and fastness of the Philistines. The sea-coast bordered on the Mediterranean. The country was fruitful, and remarkable for its rivers, especially the river Eshcol. Its people were wild, crafty, and cruel; they were in the immediate neighbourhood of that Phœnicia whose cruel idolatries and gross naturalism proved so often fatal to Israel. Samson was the most celebrated man of the tribe of Dan.

II. Notice the family of Samson's parents. In Zorah, the village on the cliff, there lived a Danite farmer and his wife. To this household went the Divine message—a pious, holy, prayerful household; we may be sure we should find they were afflicted in the afflictions of Israel. The entire story of the parents shows a pious and devoted pair, characterised also by simplicity and fear on the part of the man, and a fine spiritual shrewdness on the part of the woman, and in both by the desire to receive and obey Divine instructions.

III. Look at the circumstances of Samson's education, and consider how strong men are made. A rigid abstinence was to be the material conservatism of strength, training alike body and mind to be the vehicle of spiritual power, and compelling

the inference that strong men are made by the education they receive, by their lessons in abstinence and self-denial. A strong man is characterised by two things—by the purpose of his life, and the strength he brings to bear upon it.

IV. Glance at the age of Israel in which Samson was born. There was Providence in the rise of Samson. The Book of Judges gives us the story of a very disordered state of Israel's history; the record of Israel during a period like that of our Heptarchy or like the annals of the kings of Rome; yet a distinct mark and thread of Divine purpose and plan of government runs through it, as through any other period or epoch of the story of the peculiar people. God watches over the lives of states and the lives of men.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 241.

REFERENCE: xiii. 12.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 168.

Chap. xiii., vers. 18-22.—"And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?"

I. IT is clear that this angel was in human form, for twice Manoah's wife, twice Manoah, and once the history itself calls him "man" or "man of God." And yet the Deity of this man is as perfectly evident. When asked His name, He is not afraid to give the one by which Christ is distinctly designated in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, "Secret" or "Wonderful,"—for the two words in the original are the same. At the sight of Him as He ascends, Manoah and his wife fall on their faces to the ground. In the twenty-second verse Manoah expressly asserts respecting Him, "We have seen God."

II. The language of Christ to Manoah's wife was all concerning "a deliverance," which was to come through her. In whatever garb Christ may visit us, it is still an advent; and the purpose of that advent is to strike off a chain, to give liberty, essential, true, eternal liberty, "deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 249.

REFERENCES: xiii. 22, 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1340; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 95. xiii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 440. xiii. 24.—I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 149.

Chap. xiii., vers. 24, 25 (with xvi., 31).—"And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him," etc.

I. CONSIDER the character of Samson. His character is unlike that of the other heroes of Hebrew story. (1) Alone in the

Old Testament he overflows with joyousness. His very name means "Sunlike." He has a sportive wit which sparkles in rhythmic couplets, flashes in epigrams, plays upon words. (2) This great child of daring and genius is brought up a Nezyir-Elohim with his vow of strictness. But his strictness in one direction was compensated for by laxity in another. His unrivalled bodily strength co-existed with abject moral weakness. (3) Being such as he was, Samson naturally fell lower and lower. When the Philistines shouted, the cords seemed to melt away before the bracing of those mighty sinews; but the chains of his own sin, with which he was tied and bound, he could not unloose.

II. The story of Samson has been called "the serio-comic history of a Hebrew Hercules." Instead of being comic, it is pathetic and tragic in the highest degree. It is one of those histories of a soul's fall, in the Bible, which are most like summaries of an almost universal experience; like parables in which we may trace features like our own and those of hundreds more.

III. The question has often been asked, Was the fall of Solomon final? Among the Fathers of the Church different replies have been given; but the heart of the Church has turned to the more favourable answer. May we not hold, with somewhat more assurance, the same hope for the giant judge?

IV. We may gather these lessons from the life of Samson: (1) Flee from every sin that has light in its eye and honey on its tongue. (2) We learn from Samson the weakness of our own will. Our wills must be strengthened: (*a*) by the sympathy of Christ; (*b*) by the inward gift of the Spirit.

BISHOP ALEXANDER, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 78 (see also *The Great Question*, p. 145).

I. NOTICE first, that in Samson we have a man of surpassing physical strength. He was from first to last a huge, lone pugilist, capable of dealing tremendous blows: he could smite, rend, crush with his two hands marvellously, and that was all. He recognised his own ability, and did earnestly what he knew he could do.

II. Observe what Samson's countrymen thought of his amazing strength. (1) They ascribed it to the Spirit of the Lord. Samson's chief value lay, perhaps, in the one inspiring thought which his prowess awakened—the thought that God was there. (2) The people believed that Samson's strength, having its source in the Spirit of Jehovah, was intimately connected with

the Nazariteship of the man, and depended for its continuance upon the maintenance of that Nazariteship. Thus he served to remind them that their might and their hope as a nation lay in their fidelity to the consecration to which they had been chosen. He taught them that to be strong was to be faithful, and that with faithlessness came weakness and decay.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 72.

Chap. xiii. ver. 25 (with xiv., ver 6., xvi., 20., Heb. xi., 32-34).

IF we inquire where the great strength of Samson lay, three answers exist; one in the Old Testament; one in the New Testament; another in the newest testament of all—the current life of our own day.

I. The first response brings us face to face with God. The historian of the Judges traces Samson's power, by one single and swift step, to Jehovah, and credits his marvellous triumphs to the mighty and immediate movements of the Divine Spirit.

II. What is attributed to God directly and at once in the Old Testament, is set down to the credit of Samson's "faith" in the New, and accordingly this Divine hero takes his place in the long roll-call of conquering believers, along with Abel and Abraham, Jacob and Joseph, Deborah and David.

III. Looking at Samson in the full blaze of all the lights that shine on human character in the making, what is the answer yielded to the demand, "Tell me where thy great strength lieth?" (1) He was born in an elect home, and belonged to a devout and consecrated family stock, and had been dedicated to God from his birth. (2) Samson's Nazarism must have exercised an incalculable power upon his mind, and fixed in the "porcelain" of his nature the faith that he had a supreme work to do for God and was responsible to Him. (3) Samson's natural cheerfulness was one of the sources of his strength. (4) The urgent need of his people provoked and stimulated Samson's faith, as his vow had inspired it. (5) The teaching of Samson's fall is, that nothing external, though it be the purest and best, can enable us "to keep the heights the soul is competent to gain." God, and God alone, is sufficient for continuous progress and final victory.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 97.

Chap. xiii. ver. 25.

THE lesson taught by Samson's life is that spiritual men are not free from the temptations common to man, and the very

eagerness and impulsiveness of some men render them specially liable to fall.

I. The life of Samson is a witness to God's Spirit from beginning to end.

II. We see from Samson what a priceless possession is the gift of an independent spirit in thinking and acting, such as the Judge in Israel displayed among his fellow-men.

III. Samson's fall is a picture of every-day experience, when a spiritual man yields to the lusts which war within him and enslave him if they prevail against him.

C. E. SEARLE, *The Cambridge Review*, Oct. 21, 1885.

Chap. xiii. ver. 25 (with viii. ver. 21).

I. THE tradition and idea of Samson always associates him with strength, but it was rude, animal energy. Samson belongs to the same age as Gideon, probably also to the same age which Homer has sung.

II. This rude type of strength was sacramental and Divine. Even in the wildest deeds of Samson's career, there is the teaching of another and higher strength. Rude as he was, and primeval as was his age, his strength was in the name of the Lord, which made heaven an earth.

III. We speak of typical men, representative men. Is such language permissible as applied to Samson. Here the words of Hengstenberg may be quoted: "Samson was the personification of Israel in the period of the Judges; strong in the Lord, and victorious over all his enemies; weak through sin, of which Delilah is the image, and a slave to the weakest of his enemies. His life is an actual prophecy of a more satisfactory condition of the people; one more closely corresponding to the ideal which was first to be imperfectly fulfilled under Samuel and David, and afterwards perfectly in Christ."

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 264.

REFERENCES: xiii. 25.—S. Wilberforce, *Sermons before the University of Oxford*, 1871, p 72. xiv. 4.—E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 277. xiv. 8, 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix.. No. 1703 xiv. 14.—Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 210; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 304. xiv.—Parker, vol. vi., pp. 107, 116. xv. 15-19.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 38. xv. 18—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 21 xv. 19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 120.

Chap. xv., ver. 20.—"And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years."

SAMSON can only be spoken of as an unsuccessful great man; his name stands high on the scrolls of the faithful, but his life was after all a splendid failure, and few indeed are the lives to which that term does not apply.

I Two mistakes we make in life. (1) One of our great blunders is in beating our hands against the stern necessity which walls in our being, and expecting that it will give way to us; we set ourselves above our powers, and we quarrel with Providence because we have failed, perhaps, in the task we were never called upon to perform. (2) We are too much in the habit of testing power in life by its prominence, as if we said there were no stars in the heavens but those which glitter to the vision; the astronomer knows that there are multitudes of stars which ordinary eyes have not seen. All strength may honour God and fulfil its end, the weakest as well as the strongest seeing God as behind all strength, for God's law seems to be to honour weak goodness, and to make it more; so to every kind of strength is given its life and its law.

II. The theory of the great modern atheistic philosophy is that in the universe there is no place for weakness, all life is the conquest of strength, "the survival of the fittest." There is no place here for Divine grace; but every labouring gardener would give a widely different lesson and interpretation to life. If weeds and vegetables were left to a free fight, in which the strongest specimens only come to maturity, the garden would be a scene of license and disorder.

God does not permit mere hereditary goodness; "He giveth more grace." In all nature's weakness we put on our crown of immortal hopes. "By the grace of God I am what I am, but it is no more I, but Christ that dwelleth in me."

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 358.

REFERENCE: xvi. 1-3.—E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix, p. 342.

Chap. xvi., ver. 6.—"Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth."

THIS has been the question of the world to the Church from the beginning. Conscious of the fact that a spiritual force is in the midst of it, perceiving its power over men, the world asks again and again wherein consists the strength of the kingdom, which, even from its seeming contradictions, it is reluctantly sensible is not of the world.

I. The strength of Christianity lies in the continued activity of the living Christ. "I am He that liveth and was dead." This is to the believer the only sufficient explanation of the history of the last eighteen centuries.

II. A second source of the strength of the Church is the power of its doctrine over the human soul. That power lies primarily in the very nature of the doctrine. Christianity at its first promulgation by our Lord and his Apostles was an appeal tc the conscience—the moral sense, the innate religiousness of man—not so much to the wonder, the awe, the reverence, as to feelings more deeply seated in him; less to his imagination than to his spiritual constitution.

And the doctrine of Christianity has also all the force which belongs to definiteness. The human soul welcomes religion as a revelation of something beyond its own discovery, as to itself, the world around, and the future which lies before it.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermon Preached at the Opening of Selywn College, Cambridge*, Oct. 10th, 1882.

Chap. xvi., ver. 15.—"And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?"

AT the close of Samson's history we are taught how one of God's own servants is lost in the country of God's foes, and how God hears him and saves him in the far country. It is the old story, man backsliding and God restoring

I. The very words which might represent the celestial entreaty of heavenly wisdom, are those of the most fascinating sin and temptation. The salvation of none of us depends upon our perception, but upon our strength.

II. Notice the manner of Samson's fall: it was by the extortion of his secret; therefore has it been said, "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues," or, which is the same thing, within it is the secret of life. The strength of life lies in having something we will not yield; something within, over which the tempter has no power. Samson renounced his profession as a Nazarite. That was the fatal step. He revealed the secret of the Lord to the scorn of the Philistines; he surrendered his sacred vow to the foes of the Lord.

III. In the spectacle of Samson asleep we see the carelessness of the tempted soul. Strength is gone; character is gone. Israel's hero has lost himself. He surrendered the secret of the Lord, and awoke to find the Spirit of the Lord departed from him.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 388.

Chap. xvi., ver. 17.—"Then Samson told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

SAMSON is unlike any other character in Scripture. Although the sphere in which he moved was a comparatively narrow one, he seems to have made a profound impression on the men of his time. The whole active life of Samson was spent in the district which bordered on the old Philistine frontier. He lived among the men of his own little tribe of Dan, and his history seems to have been compiled from its annals. His work consisted in a series of dashing exploits calculated to raise the hopes and spirits of his down-trodden countrymen, and to strike the Philistines with apprehension and terror, and thus he prepared the way for a more systematic and successful revolt in after times.

It was the turning-point in Samson's career when he told his secret to Delilah. It was the passage of the Rubicon which separated his life of triumphant vigour from his life of humiliation and weakness. Until he spoke these words, he was master of his destiny; after he had spoken them, nothing awaited him but disaster and death.

I. The first thing that strikes us in this account of Samson's ruin is the possible importance of apparent trifles to the highest well-being of life and character. Samson's unshorn hair told other Israelites what to expect of him, and rebuked in his own conscience all in his life that was not in keeping with his Nazarite vow. The great gift of physical strength was attached to this one particular of Nazarite observation which did duty for all the rest. In itself it was a trifle whether his hair was cut or allowed to grow, but it was not a trifle in the light of these associations.

II. Samson's history suggests the incalculably great influence which belongs to woman in controlling the characters and destinies of men. Delilah is the ruin of Samson; Deborah is the making of Barak. Deborah's song suggests what Samson might have been had Delilah been only as herself.

III. Nothing is more noteworthy in this history than the illustration it affords of the difference between physical and moral courage. Samson had physical courage; it was the natural accompaniment of his extraordinary strength. But he lacked the moral strength which lies not in nerve, nor in brain, but in a humble yet vivid sense of the presence of God.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1111.

REFERENCE: *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 358.

Chap. xvi., ver. 20.—"And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

Of all the heroes whose exploits we read in the Book of Judges, none so keenly awakens our sympathy, or so fully arrests our attention, as that solitary hero, Samson. His life is no romance of the past, but it is a type and picture of your life and mine, with its difficulties, temptations, and dangers.

From the story of Samson we learn :—

I. The absolute necessity there is of our achieving a nobler morality, a higher level of religion, than is to be found in the mere conventional standards which are rife around us. What was it made Samson strong? He refused to accept the low degraded religious standard which his contemporaries were content with. To him nothing short of a real harmony between the promise of God and the fact of his people's freedom would be satisfactory.

II. On no account sacrifice your convictions. The conviction of Samson was that the dominion of God was absolute and irresistible, that the promises of God were true and everlastingly faithful. The force of conviction in your mind that Christ is true, that His Holy Spirit is a real power and influence in your heart, will make you strong, nay omnipotent, against all evil in the world.

III. Temptation comes gradually. It seems like a sudden catastrophe when Samson, who had been the glory of his people, the very hero of Dan, is led a nerveless and enslaved captive into the dungeons of the Philistines. Yet the progress of sin was very gradual over his heart. Inch by inch Delilah wearied out the strength of resistance, and then came the terrible catastrophe.

IV. With every sin there comes a blunting of that moral capacity by which you detect its presence—"He wist not that the Lord was departed from him." No man is the same after sin; no man ever can be. Sow an act and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a destiny.

V. Notice two thoughts arising from the story: (1) True convictions can be had from Christ alone. (2) Preserve the consecration of your whole life to Him.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 299.

REFERENCES: xvi. 20.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 413; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p 46; Parker, vol. vi., p. 169; S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 121. xvi. 20, 21.

—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 224. xvi. 21.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 87. xvi. 23.—W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 79. xvi. 25,—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 316.

Chap. xvi., ver. 28.—"And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

I. To lose our vision is the doom of losing our strength. Impaired moral perception is one of the penalties we pay for depraved action. In Samson we behold what weakness everywhere is; in him we behold what it is for the will not to be master in its own house; borne along by the vehemence of ungovernable impulses.

II. But there came an hour of triumph and recovery for Samson. He had still one resource: he had the voice of prayer; he had still power with God. The building we may conceive of as rude and frail, rough, cyclopean, in harmony with the style of the architecture of that time. It was the temple of the great Merman, or Fish-god. Possibly Samson was brought out to attempt some exhibition of his strength. It is not impossible that the Philistines intended that he should sell his life by some daring hazard, some blind gladiatorship, some display of strength in contest with beasts let loose upon him.

III. Samson's death is not to be regarded as suicide. If so, then every death in battle is suicide; every death that looks forward to a great possibility is suicide. It is not at all clear that Samson intended to kill himself. As he thought of old times he felt within him again the pulses of spiritual strength. His spirit kindled to the height of his great prayer, and as the building fell, he bowed his head and expired like a victor in the moment of victory.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 407.

REFERENCES: xvi. 30.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 81; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. iii., p. 388. xvii. 3.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 261. xvii. 6.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 124. xviii.—*Ibid.*, p. 236. xviii. 9.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 261. xviii. 9, 10.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. ii., p. 330. xviii. 24.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 109. xviii. 26.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 170 xix.—*Ibid.*, p. 144. xx. 3.—*Ibid.*, p. 170. xxi. 3.—*Ibid.*, p. 151. See on Judges, *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 115.

RUTH.

Chap. i.—iv.

THE Book of Ruth is a love-story told in four chapters. It gives us a glimpse of every-day life in Bethlehem; in home and in harvest-field, in its general gossip and its law-suits, more than three thousand years ago.

I. Glancing back over the lines of this sweet and pure pastoral idyll, we feel that rarely did human story more impressively demonstrate the unspeakable worth of lowly folk, the fine and favourable issues of seemingly suppressed lives, the hidden wealth of true and unobtrusive souls, for nations and for the race. Notoriety counts for nothing in the sum of things. The world's future lay more in quiet Bethlehem, with Naomi and Ruth, than it did at the head-quarters of Judge Eli. Let us not despise ourselves. God does not, and our future is with Him. Every name is historic in His estimate.

II. But we are not near enough to the heart of this story to hear its beat and feel its warmth, until we see that it is a true and tender, pure and heroic woman's love that gives such grace to these Hebrew homes and confers such peerless worth on these lowly lives. The spell of the Book of Ruth is Ruth herself, and the chief charm of Ruth is her unselfish and devoted love.

III. Life and love lead to God. For life is God's gift, and love is of God's nature. "We love, because He first loved us." This is true of the love in the home as much as of the love of the Church. All pure and unselfish love comes from God and leads to God.

Thus the story of Ruth is a fragment in a missionary report. It tells of the conversion of a Gentile and illustrates the wisest way of winning souls. God saves the world by love, and we cannot succeed by departing from His method and ignoring His Spirit. Naomi is a typical home missionary, and Ruth is the pattern and prophecy of the success that crowns wise and loving labour.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 119.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 279. i. 1-5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 81 (also S. Cox, *The Book of*

Ruth, p. 43). i. 1-8.—Lady A. Blackwood, *Sunday Magazine*, 1885, p. 271. i. 1-18.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 185. i. 2.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 15. i. 6-22.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 92 (also S. Cox, *The Book of Ruth*, p. 63). i. 8.—W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 136; *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 60. i. 14.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 350. i. 14-18.—*Sunday Magazine*, 1885, p. 271. i. 16.—R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 267; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 54; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 49. i. 16, 17.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 125; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 31; *Congregationalist*, vol. vii., p. 656. i. 19.—W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 105; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 414; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 283. i.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 198. ii. 1-23.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 165 (also S. Cox, *The Book of Ruth*, p. 81).

Chap. ii., ver. 2.—"**And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace.**"

Work has many aspects. It may be treated as a portion of man's curse. But it was not work which was new to man. From the beginning work had been assigned to him; the difference was that work henceforth was to be both excessive in degree and comparatively unremunerative.

Notice: I. Nature works. Sometimes in the mere consciousness of health and vitality. There is that in a man which will not and cannot be idle. Doubtless human life is the gainer by every kind and department of industry. The labourers of society are its benefactors. Better any work than any idleness.

II. Faith works. (1) The work of faith looks within. Faith, which is the sight of the unseen, apprehends the existence of spirit, the possibility of regeneration, and the direct influence of Divine grace upon the heart and soul of man. It would not be faith in the Christian sense if it did not apprehend these mysteries. Before faith can set out upon her gleaning she must find grace in the sight of One unseen. (2) The work of faith looks upward. The eye of faith is upon God, even while the hand of faith and the foot of faith are moving among the things of this world. (3) The work of faith looks around. Faith does not look only on her own things, but on the things of others. Faith does seriously contemplate the wants and the woes and the wickednesses which are making havoc of humanity, and has something truly of that mind in her which was also first and perfectly in Christ Jesus. (4) The work of faith looks onward. Oftentimes faith would faint if it had not an onward

aspect. It is willing to wait for the day of God's power, willing to be lost and forgotten in the eventual ingathering.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Voices of the Prophets*, p. 55 (see also *Good Words*, 1886, p. 815)

REFERENCES: ii. 3.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 214; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 301. ii. 4.—R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 81; C. Kingsley, *The Water of Life*, p. 140; F. E. Paget, *Village Sermons: Trinity to Advent*, p. 201; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 266; J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part II., p. 97. ii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1851. ii. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 522; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 79; W. Meller, *Village Homilies*, p. 114; S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. i., p. 229. ii. 15, 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 464. ii. 16.—D. Lane, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 149.

Chap. ii., ver. 17.—"So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley."

I. NOTICE first, the good providence of God as illustrated in the story of Ruth and Naomi. Who was more forlorn than Naomi when she set out, penniless and a widow, both her sons dead, to return into the land of Judah. God finds the widow friends, He finds the oppressed and solitary a Ruth to stay by them, a Boaz to see that they have their rights. He is a never-failing helper in the time of trouble.

II. Notice from this history the blessing which waits upon piety, for those who are kind and affectionate and helpful in their homes. Ruth was but a daughter-in-law, yet she acted the part of a real daughter to the widowed and childless Naomi. She clave to her in her trouble, she worked for her in her poverty, and she was rewarded even on earth.

III. Ruth is also an example of maidenly modesty, purity, steadiness of conduct. She kept fast by the maidens of Boaz unto the end of the barley harvest and wheat harvest.

IV. Notice the diligence of Ruth. She gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she gleaned; it was a good day's work, bringing with it a good recompense of reward. Ruth invites us to use all diligence to make our calling and election sure. God has set us in His field, the world, and set us there to glean, to gather up as we are able the precious seed. There is much for every one to do, and the time is short.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 119.

REFERENCE: ii. 17.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 216.

Chap. ii., ver. 19.—"Where hast thou gleaned to-day?"

I. THERE are some whose only chance of gaining knowledge is by gleaning. Their education has been neglected, and their time for reading is limited. To such let me say: (1) Glean where the corn grows and lies near at hand. You will not find the corn by the wayside or on the moor, It is not in all company that you may glean wisdom. To the most of us, Where hast thou gleaned? is but another way of saying, What hast thou got as the result of thy life? (2) To glean successfully we must be willing to stoop. He who would be fed with the bread of life must humble himself.

II. If we would glean a heap, we must be content with a little at a time. It is wonderful what may be done by never passing by a thing that is worth preserving. We have trampled under foot during our life that which, if saved, would have done much to make a golden age for ourselves.

III. No one can glean well who is not able to persevere. If we mean to succeed, we must go on long after we are weary. We shall glean with greater care and industry if we remember that we must live for ever on the results of this life. If men did but think they gather gold for a crown or iron for fetters, they would be more careful what they pick up.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 142.

REFERENCES: ii. 19.—J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No 76. ii. 20.—S. Cox, *The Book of Ruth*, p. 164; H. Melvill, *Lothbury Lectures*, p. 316. ii. 30.—R. Glover, *By the Waters of Babylon*, p. 73. ii.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 204. iii. 1.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 25. iii. 1-18.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 257 (also S. Cox, *The Book of Ruth*, p. 101); *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 112. iv. 1-22.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 360 (and S. Cox, *The Book of Ruth*, p. 121); *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 126.

I. SAMUEL.

Chaps. i.-iv. (with Judges xxi., 16-25).

I. With all his virtues and natural advantages Eli had one great fault. He was a good man of the easy type; the kind of man who makes an admirable servant, who does his duty to perfection so long as his duty merely troubles himself, but who has not force of character to interfere with others; to command, to regulate the conduct of others, to incur the ill-will of others. An amiable indolence overspread his whole nature. He was one of the men who have great faith in the power of things to right themselves, in the virtue of leaving things alone, of letting nature take its course. Accordingly he let his own life and fortunes drift and become entangled with the wreck of other men's misdeeds, and so came to the end he did.

The character of Eli is far from uncommon, and a far larger amount of disaster is produced in the world by such softness than by deliberate wickedness. There are times in most lives when the current of circumstances sets strongly towards sin, and when a man will certainly sin if his rule of life has been to avoid all that is painful and to choose what will for the time give him security and ease.

II. The vices which Eli suffered in his sons did not terminate in themselves, but had the effect of making the worship of God abhorrent and despicable in the country. This may be done not only by the sensuality and greed of the clergy, but in other ways as well. The carelessness about truth, which merely preaches traditionary opinions, brings God's service into contempt; the indolent formality which accepts stereotyped phrases of devotion or of sentiment and puts no meaning into them; the wrangling and hastiness in discussion which show that love of party is stronger than love of truth; the preaching of doctrine which lowers men's ideas of God and righteousness; these and many such things make the worship of God contemptible.

III. While God punishes the existing priesthood, He adds a promise of raising Himself up a faithful priest. This promise was fulfilled, first of all, in Samuel, who, though not of the

priestly line, did serve in the house of God, and offered sacrifice by an exceptional and special consecration. In Samuel, the asked of God, there is a type of the readiness with which God can provide men for His service; men different from and unaffected by the times in which they live; men who can grow up pure amidst corruption, who can shake off the ignorance of their teachers and rise above all their contemporaries, who are as truly sent by God as if they were sons of a Virgin or of a Hannah.

M. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, p. 149.

References: i.-iii.—S. K. Hocking, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 26; E. Conder, *Drops and Rocks*, p. 103. i. 3.—*Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 669. i. 5.—*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 55. i. 9-28.—F. Langbridge, *Sunday Magazine*, 1885, p. 670. i. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1515. i. 20.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 218; *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 57; I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 160. i. 27.—J. Van Oosterzee, *The Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 417; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 265. i. 27, 28.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 4th series, p. 331. i.-iv.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters*, p. 299. ii. 1.—H. Thompson, *Concionalia: Outlines of Sermons for Parochial use*, vol. i., p. 216. ii. 1-27.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 283. ii. 2.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 56.

Chap. ii., ver. 3.—"By Him actions are weighed."

In all God's dealings with us there is one thing of which we may be perfectly sure,—they will be done deliberately; delicately, by measurement, with accuracy, in proportion. We are quite safe there from all hastiness and inconsideration—those two banes of human judgment. Job's prayer is always answered, "Let me be weighed in the balance." Alike the greatest and the least—from those giants of nature, the everlasting hills, down to the dust of the earth, and to the smallest thought which ever flashed through a man's mind—all are weighed.

I. Let us be sure that we give actions their proper place in the plan of our salvation. Actions never save a man. Actions have, strictly speaking, nothing to do with our salvation. But actions occupy four parts in the great scheme of our redemption. (1) They are the tests of life—"He that abideth in Me, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (2) They are the language of love—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (3) They glorify God before men—"Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (4) And although they are not the meritorious causes of our final rewards, yet they determine the degrees

and proportions of our final state—"He will reward every man according as his work shall be."

II. It would be the greatest presumption on our part to say how God weighs our actions. It is sufficient to know that He does weigh them. That hand cannot err. But we may carry out God's own metaphor a little way and conceive it thus: (1) On the one hand is the action; on the other, what that action might have been, and ought to have been, and, but for our sin, would have been. (2) On the one side the action we did; on the other, the action we meant to do, and promised to do. (3) On the one side, what we have received; on the other, what we have rendered.

III. When God holds the scales of His children's actions. He puts in something of His own over and above, and when He puts that in, the beam that had preponderated against us, turns the other way, and "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." We should be careful not to usurp an office which only Omniscience can rightly exercise.

IV We must all feel that when we are weighed in these holy scales the verdict can only be, "Tekel; thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." But the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross. That death is on the one side, and the whole world's guilt is on the other. God is "weighing them"—the blood of Christ and the sins of all mankind. God has balanced you and your substitute, and God is satisfied for ever and ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 15th series, p. 189.

REFERENCES: ii. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1736. ii. 6.—*Ibid.*, vol. ix., No. 523. ii. 8.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 387. ii. 9.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 176.

Chap. ii., vers. 12, 26.—"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men."

THE sacred historian dwells with evident pleasure on the beautiful, holy boyhood of the child who served before the Lord, wearing a linen ephod, and who in the visitations of the night, thrilling to the Divine voice which called him by his name, answered fearlessly, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." Yet from the same tabernacle, from the same tutelage, from the same influences, came forth also the sons of Eli; and the sons of Eli were men of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

I. The training the same, the product how different; the school the same, the boys whom it educated so fearfully contrasted. Such contrasts seem strange, but they are in reality matters of daily experience. Daily from the same home we see boys go forth, some to live noble, self-denying lives, others to live lives that come to nothing, and do deeds as well undone. So too, often, from happy conditions come base characters, from degraded environments strong, sweet natures struggle into the light.

II. Our inference from this is, that the personal devotion of the heart, the personal surrender of the individual will, can alone save a man or make him holy A man's life may be influenced, but it is not determined by his circumstances. No aid, save that which comes from above to every man, can help him to climb the mountain-path of life, or enter the wicket-gate of righteousness. Nor, on the other hand, can any will or power except his own retard his ascent or forbid his ingress. On ourselves, on the conscious exercise of our own free will, depends our eternal salvation or ruin.

F. W. FARRAR, *In the Days of the Youth*, p. 99.

REFERENCES: ii. 12.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 57. ii. 17.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 228, and vol. vii., p. 58

Chap. ii., ver. 18.—"But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod."

SAMUEL was a *child*-prophet, and that fact is pregnant with the deepest signification. That a child should have any interest in God's temple, and especially that a child should hold office in that temple, is a circumstance which should arrest our attention.

I. God's interest in human life begins at the earliest possible period. This is an argument for infant baptism which I have never known to be touched, much less shaken.

II. In Hannah's making Samuel a coat every year, we see how age must work for childhood, strength must toil lovingly and helpfully for weakness. The resources of life must be expended on the children of need.

III. Looking at the call of Samuel we see: (1) Almighty God calling man at an unlikely time. In the pomp of mid-day He comes to us, blazing with all effulgence of glory, and addresses us with majesty and overwhelming force; in the hour of midnight He approaches His sleeping ones, and by dream or vision or still small voice, would hold intercourse with His saints. (2) We see Almighty God calling an unlikely person. We should have thought it more probable that God would call the aged

prophet, rather than the ministering child. But the first shall be last and the last first. We may enlarge this incident so as to find in it a great principle of exquisite beauty and of world-wide application; that principle is that Almighty God is constantly sending messages by *children*. (3) In this scene we have also the revelation of the true state of man for receiving God's message—"Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." It is the place of the creature to listen to the Creator. Good listening is one condition of progress.

PARKER, *Wednesday Evenings in Cavendish Chapel*, p. 28.

I. THE first notice we have of Samuel's ministering before the Lord reminds us of the decency and gravity necessary at all times and in all persons, in approaching Him. As Samuel is an example of reverence in worship, so in Saul we have an example of irreverence. There have ever been these two kinds of Christians—those who belonged to the Church, and those who did not. And while, on the one hand, reverence for sacred things has been a characteristic of Church Christians on the whole, so want of reverence has been characteristic of Christians not of the Church. The one have prophesied after the figure of Samuel, the other after the figure of Saul.

II. So natural is the connection between reverence and faith that the only wonder is, how any one can for a moment imagine he has faith in God, and yet allow himself to be irreverent towards Him. Hence even heathen religions have considered faith and reverence identical. Those who have separated from the Church of Christ have in this respect fallen into greater than pagan error. They have learned to be familiar and free with sacred things, as it were, on principle. They have considered awe to be superstition and reverence to be slavery.

III. Those who worship in a humble and reverent way will find the effect of it, through God's mercy, in their heavenly walk. If we honestly strive to obey God, then our outward manner will be reverent also. This is the true way of doing devotional service, not to have feelings without acts, or acts without feelings, but both to do and to feel—to see that our hearts and bodies are both sanctified together and become one.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. v., p. 167 (see also J. H. Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 1).

REFERENCES: ii. 18.—M. G. Pearse, *Sermons for Children*, p. 56; *Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 28; J. Reid Howatt, *The Churchette*, p. 129; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 299.

Chap. ii., ver. 21 (with ver. 26).—"And the child Samuel grew before the Lord."

Early growth in grace and knowledge, the training up of a child in the fear and nurture of the Lord and in the praise of His holy name; this is the great lesson which is exemplified in the early life of Samuel.

I. Let us first recall who Samuel was. (1) He was the child of Hannah, given in answer to her fervent prayer. (2) His very name "Samuel," which means "asked of God," reminds us of his mother's piety and his own. (3) From his birth he was dedicated to God's service.

II. Observe further, how God communicated with Samuel. Three several times did the Lord call Samuel by name. It was a terrible message that God gave the young child to deliver, but he told it, every whit. Those who have the care of children should early impress them with the thought that God sees them, that He is about their bed and about their path. Teach them to hear God's voice betimes, and to obey His movement in their souls.

R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 130.

One of the most beautiful things that God has made in the world is growth, and the world is full of it. God did not make a great Samuel at once, but a little child Samuel, who grew before Him. I will speak of four thoughts as included in growing before the Lord.

I. Samuel grew at the Lord's House. At this time there was no temple. There was the tabernacle, with the court round about, where the burnt offerings were consumed on the altar. But, also, there must have been chambers for the priests, and their servants, the Levites. In one of these Samuel lived. Eli's dwelling must have been close beside the sacred court with its altar and holy places of the Lord's tabernacle.

II. Samuel grew in the Lord's sight. This means that the Lord was pleased to see Samuel grow as he did. "Grow in grace" is the Apostle's word. Growth in love is the true progress; for love is holiness, and holiness is light, and light is God.

III. Samuel grew by the Lord's grace. His mother had lent him to the Lord, and the Lord saw to his growing.

IV. Samuel grew for the Lord's service. (1) Little services

from little people are acceptable to God. (2) The little grows by and by to the great.

J. EDMOND, *Sermons Preached at the Dedication of Union Chapel, Islington*, p. 68 (C.S.).

REFERENCE: ii. 22.—J. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 150.

Chap. ii., ver. 25.—"Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them."

I. THE lesson of the text is that there were some on whom advice was wasted, for the law of God's providence was that they must perish; that they had neglected such great means of grace so long and so obstinately, as to have hardened their hearts beyond repentance. There was a time, even with Hophni and Phinehas, there was a time with all the souls who who may since have been equally lost, when God willed not to slay them; when His words to them were thus recorded by the prophet Ezekiel: "Why will ye die? Turn yourselves and live ye." God does speak to us now in the words of Ezekiel; He may and will, if we are obstinately careless, speak to us hereafter in the words of Samuel; we shall not listen to the voice of God's word, because we have sinned beyond repentance.

II. Nor will it avail to complain that we should not have been so fatally hardened had the means of good been more sparingly given us; that we should have loved the service of the tabernacle more had we been less familiar with it. The same page of Scripture which tells us of the sons of Eli tells us of Samuel also; not born indeed, but brought by his mother, at his earliest years, to be in that same place, and to draw grace and strength from those very ministrations which, to the sons of Eli, had been the savour of death unto death. It is for us to determine whether we will be as Samuel or as Hophni and Phinehas; whether we will gain the habit of profiting by holy things or of despising them.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 218.

REFERENCES: ii. 26.—F W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 99; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 178; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 130. ii. 30.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xxi., p. 2; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1811; A. W. Hare, *Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 35, C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of Life and Godliness*, p. 131; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 357; J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons*

on Special Occasions, p. 157; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 75. ii. 33.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 238. ii. 1.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 1; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 194; Parker, vol. vii., p. 58.

Chap. iii., vers. 1-10.

Of Bible boys Samuel is a chief favourite. The reason is that nothing under the sun is more beautiful than piety in childhood. Nothing like grace for making the young graceful. Martin Luther in his gentler moments dwelt with great tenderness on the boyhood of Samuel. He found in him what he longed to see in his own boys and in all boys. When God called "Samuel, Samuel," he answered at once, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." There we have, as in a nutshell, the history of a child of God.

I. The Lord speaking.—God speaks to us: (1) in His Providence; (2) in His Word; (3) by His Spirit.

II. The child hearing.—The ear is one of the main gateways of the soul. But far more wonderful is the inner ear of the heart, or the conscience, by which you hear the noiseless voice of God. You may mistake the voice at first; Samuel did so. But if you mistake God's voice, He will speak to you again and again till you know both the Speaker and His message; and then you will be like this delighted child when he lay listening to his name pronounced by Jehovah's lips.

III. The child serving.—Samuel was one of the ministering children of the Bible, for in his childhood he ministered before the Lord. His obedience was: (1) prompt; (2) hearty; (3) life-long. His motto all through life was, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

J. Wells, *Bible Children*, p. 133.

In this passage four thoughts are suggested:—

I. The sleep.—That night God was present in a special manner. He was near to Samuel. But Samuel was unconscious of His presence, for he was asleep. That sleeping boy was a picture of what many boys and girls amongst ourselves are, in a different sense—*spiritually asleep*. There is (1) the sleep of carelessness; (2) the sleep of sin; (3) the sleep of security.

II. God's awakening call.—God has many ways of awakening sleepers: (1) There is God's call in the Word; (2) there is God's call in Providence.

III The lying down again.—In Samuel's case this was all right and good. He was an unusually dutiful child. Whenever he was called up he sprang, and that again and again. In the case of most, the lying down again is fatal. It is never safe to count upon more than one call; it is never safe to neglect the first. That was what Lot's wife did, and she never got another chance.

IV. God's call recognised and answered.—Let us go to God as Samuel went to Eli, saying, "Here am I, for thou calledst me."

J. H. WILSON, *The Gospel and its Fruits*, p. 3.

REFERENCES: iii. 1-19.—F. Langbridge, *The Sunday Magazine*, 1885, p. 671. iii. 7.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 32; Parker, vol. vii., p. 59.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—"Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child."

I. WE may define a call, as usually understood, to be an inward conviction of the soul that such and such is the will of God concerning it, accompanied with an irresistible desire to obey the conviction. In such cases a test is required. There is perhaps no extent of self-deception to which an individual may not be led who concentrates the whole of his thoughts and meditations upon the internal emotions of which he is sensible. Hence the necessity of erecting a tribunal without, to which may be referred the judgment of the inward conviction, and by which we may see whether the voice which is abroad in our hearts, stirring and moving, harmonises with the voice of parents and brethren and priest, that so we may, with Eli, perceive of a surety whether the Lord hath called His child.

II. There is another criterion by which men might go far to ascertain the nature of those internal sensations of which they speak, namely the criterion of outward circumstances. In order to test feeling, we want something removed as far as possible from what is exciting. In the majority of cases it may be fairly assumed that what we are is what God would have us be; the station of life in which we find ourselves is that which He would have us fill. When, therefore, we seem to be Divinely led to an extraordinary course of conduct, it is no vain prudence which bids us inquire whether outward circumstances tend to encourage or dissuade us. Calls to abandon our present position should be rigidly examined, if w.

would not be beguiled like unstable souls, and be proved in the end to have forsaken our own mercies.

BISHOP WOODFORD, *Sermons Preached in Various Churches*, p. 193.

Chap. iii., ver. 9.—"Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

SAMUEL was called to be a prophet of God in a great crisis of Jewish history. His appearance was quieter and less dramatic than those of Moses and Elijah, but it was almost as momentous. The epoch was one of those which determine the character and destiny of nations. One great act in the drama of Jewish history was closing, another was opening. Two great revolutions were effected: the one political, the other religious.

Samuel was clearly one of those men of manifold gifts and functions whom God raises up in great crises and for great services. His entire course and character were probably determined by the spirit in which he responded to God's first call, and discharged the arduous service to which he was called.

Notice: I. Life is full of voices of God, only we lack the spiritual faculty which discerns them. (1) When we think of God's voice we probably think first and most spontaneously of God's revelation of His will in the Bible. (2) There are again voices of God's providence, which, if we have docile hearts, we shall not fail to recognise. (3) The instincts and yearnings of our own spiritual nature are an unmistakeable voice of God. (4) And to this religious nature God speaks by the motions and monitions of His Holy Spirit; awakening solicitudes, exciting desires, touching impulses. (5) In moments of intellectual perplexity, amid the tempest and earthquake of intellectual strife, the still small voice of the religious soul is heard—God's voice within us. (6) In quieter and more thoughtful moods of life we hear the voice of God. (7) God has voices that reach us in crowds; distinct, perhaps loud, above every din of business or clamour of strife or song of revelry. (8) In moments of temptation, even, God's voice finds a tongue in some lingering power of conscience, in some sensitive remnants of virtue, in some angel memories of a pious home and an innocent heart. (9) In times of sorrow God's voice comes to us; summoning us to faith in His will, His purpose, and His presence, and to patience and acquiescence in the sacrifice demanded of us. (10) Most terrible of all is it when the first voice of God that we seriously listen to is a sentence of doom.

(11) Again, at what unlikely times and in what unlikely places God may speak to us. (12) To what unlikely persons God's call comes.

II. How then do we respond to God's call? Is not Samuel's answer, "Speak, Lord; Thy servant heareth," in its childlike simplicity, faith and submissiveness, a most beautiful and perfect type of what our answer should be? Even the maturest and most saintly cannot transcend this response of the temple-child.

III. One more lesson we may learn, viz. the religious importance of the passive or receptive side of our spiritual life. This is the conclusion of the whole matter—that in the activities of our zeal we do not forget its inspirations in God. The more entire our spirit of dependence, the more effective the work we do.

H. ALLON, *The Vision of God*, p. 257.

THE life of Samuel was great, regarding him as the instrument which God chose for changing the civil polity of His chosen people. To Samuel was intrusted the inauguration of the kingdom of Israel. He also stands at the head of the great succession of prophets whom God sent to His people.

I. Notice, first, that this great character comes before us in connection with the dedication of the child by his parents. If great men avail themselves of the tendencies of their day, and do raise their own and help forward the generation that follows; if God is educating humanity, leading it, bringing it to Himself; may we not be keeping back the true progress of our race by accepting these immortal instruments from Him, but failing to give them back to Him, to work His will as long as He may require them?

II. His call to God's service. The Bible is full of the history of the calls of God. The mode of the call has been various, and the manner in which the call has been received has been various also. We are all taught to expect to be called by God. None are too poor, too humble, too little gifted; all are to be fellow-workers with Him.

III. Notice the message which Samuel was called upon to deliver. It required him to announce to the aged Eli, the friend and protector of his youth, the destruction of his family before God. The delivery of this message clearly implied courage. There is an element of reproof contained in all messages of the truth, in whatever line of life they are delivered. In all

great lives there is an element of reproof, and also of singularity and loneliness, from which men naturally shrink, and which they require real courage to maintain. Each man has a work to do which is his own and not another's. From One only he need never feel alone; from Him who called him to the work he has to do, and with whom and in whom the life's work should be done.

BISHOP KING, *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, Oct. 23rd, 1879.

GOD speaks to us in many different ways and in many different tones. (1) He speaks to us by the works of nature. (2) He speaks to us by the dispensations of His providence. (3) He speaks to us by the voice of conscience. (4) He speaks to us by the words of the Bible and the teaching of His holy Church. (5) He speaks to us at the hour of death.

J. WILMOT-BUXTON, *Literary Churchman Sermons*, p. 89.

I. SAMUEL was happy in his start in life. He was blessed with pious parents, who, even from his birth, devoted him to God's service.

II. Samuel had early learned to obey: his habits of obedience won him the favour of Eli; yea, more, they won him the favour of the Lord Himself.

III. In Samuel's answer to God's call we see: (1) obedience; (2) perseverance; (3) patience.

IV. God speaks to children: (1) by His works; (2) by means of His holy word. If we wish to learn we must present to the Lord a teachable spirit.

G. LITTING, *Thirty Sermons for Children*, p. 127.

REFERENCES: iii. 9.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 163; Bishop Walsham How, *Plain Words to Children*, p. 96; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 586; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xx., p. 335.

Chap iii., ver. 10.—"And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth."

THE call of Samuel is very different in its circumstances from the call of St. Paul; yet it resembles it in this particular, that the circumstance of his obedience to it is brought out prominently even in the words put into his mouth by Eli in the text. The characteristic of all Divine calls in Scripture is: (1) to require instant obedience, and (2) to call us we know not to what; to call us on in the darkness. Faith alone can obey them.

I. Those who are living religiously have from time to time truths they did not know before, or had no need to consider, brought before them forcibly; truths which involve duties, which are in fact precepts and claim obedience. In this and similar ways Christ calls us now. He works through our natural faculties and circumstances in life.

II. These Divine calls are commonly sudden and as indefinite and obscure in their consequences as in former times. The call may come to us: (1) through the death of a friend or relative; (2) through some act of sacrifice, suddenly resolved on and executed, which opens as it were a gate into the second or third heaven—an entrance into a higher state of holiness. (3) The call may come through the hearing or reading of Scripture, or through an unusual gift of Divine grace poured into our hearts.

III. Nothing is more certain than that some men do feel themselves called to high duties and works to which others are not called. No one has any leave to take another's lower standard of holiness for his own. We need not fear spiritual pride if we follow Christ's call as men in earnest. Earnestness has no time to compare itself with the state of other men; earnestness has too vivid a feeling of its own infirmities to be elated at itself. It simply says, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 17 (see also *Selection from the same*, p. 11).

I. No doubt the prophets of God were exceptional men. But in God's world the exceptional is always the evangelistic. God never makes any man for himself, least of all a prophet. The prophet Samuel illustrates the universal freedom of prophetic activity in the Hebrew community, freshly embodies the law expressed by Moses that inspiration is without limits or impediments *from above*, and is never exclusive in its intended range, or exhausted in its available supply.

II. Christ asserts over and over again the doctrine of the continuity of inspiration. His consolation, amid opposition and defeat, is that His Father reveals the truths of His kingdom to the open and trustful hearts of "babes" like young Samuel, and He solaced His followers by telling them that the Holy Spirit would tell them "all things, and bring all things to their remembrance" that He has said to them in His familiar ministry. The last word of God has not been spoken. The last counsel for a perplexed humanity has not been given.

We are but at the dawn of Revelation, and there is not and cannot be any "finis" with the Eternal.

III. The results of Samuel's inspiration are also possible to us. These results were four: (1) an enlarged and purified conception of God; (2) a strong and governing sway for ethical ideas of God and of life; (3) a contagious impulsion of others towards God and righteousness; (4) a fine susceptibility of advance in religious, social and national activity.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 139.

I. GOD called a child, not the old prophet Eli.

II. God called Samuel four times, because he did not understand at first.

III. When God calls us to service, He calls us to honour.

T. CHAMPNESS, *Little Foxes*, p. 119.

REFERENCES: iii. 10.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *A Course of Sermons for the Christian Year*, p. 273; F. W. Farrar, *Silence and the Voices of God*, p. 3; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 419; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 1869, p. 213 (see also *Old Testament Outlines*, p. 61); *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 338; E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 52. iii. 11-13.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 196. iii. 11-14.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 248.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—"Because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

IT was at Shiloh that Eli spent his years. Tranquil and busy, and in the main, honourable years they were. Shiloh was well-fitted to be the seat of ecclesiastical rule, lying as it did well off the main highroad which ran through the country from north to south, lying among hills which fairly shut it in on all sides but one, their sides terraced with vines and olives and fig trees, while in the plain below stood the tabernacle, containing the most precious things in Israel. During the greater part of the year Shiloh was as quiet as any small country cathedral town in England. Only when at the great yearly festival devout Israelites crowded from every tribe to their central national sanctuary, was its solitude invaded. Well might it have seemed an ideal house of prayer and study, of mild authority and ripe wisdom, where piety and purity and philanthropy might be trained to high perfection for the common good. Yet Shiloh was the scene of the base avarice, the high-handed violence, the vulgar profligacy of the sons of Eli; and Shiloh was the scene of Eli's weakness, so culpable in itself, so fraught with ruin to his family and his home.

I. Eli, let us observe, was otherwise, personally, a good man.

He was resigned, humble, and in a true sense, devout. He submits to be rebuked and sentenced by his inferiors without a word of remonstrance. His personal piety is especially noticeable at the moment of his death. He might have survived the national disgrace; but that the Ark of the Sacred Presence should be taken, that he could not survive—it touched the Divine honour, and Eli's devotion is to be measured by the fact that the shock of such a disgrace killed him on the spot.

II. Eli's personal excellence was accompanied by a want of moral resolution and enterprise which explains the ruin of his house. He should have removed his sons from the office which they dishonoured. Instead of that, he only talked to them. His sin was one of which only an amiable man could be guilty, but in its consequences it was fatal.

III. Two observations suggest themselves in conclusion: (1) No relationship can be more charged with responsibility than that between a parent and his children. (2) No outward circumstances can of themselves protect us against the insidious assaults of evil, or against the enfeeblement of a truant will.

H. P. LIDDON, *The Family Churchman*, July 14th, 1886 (see also *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1160).

Chap. iii., ver. 14.—"And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."

I. THERE must have been in Eli a real sense of the sacredness of his function. Whatever reverence a man can inspire by showing that his heart is personally engaged in his work, that it caused him inward delight, he will have inspired. But there is a limit to this kind of respect, and moreover a mischief in it. Eli was a pious or devout man; he was evidently a kind-hearted, amiable man, but he was not, strictly speaking, a righteous man. He did not care that God's order should be established, that wrong-doers should be punished. So long as he could keep his internal quietness all was well. He was the specimen of a departing age; he was sincere, no doubt, but his sincerity would die with him.

II. What then has become of that order of which we have heard so much? The order is just where it always was; not shattered or shaken in the smallest degree; confirmed and established by the unbelief of the people, the crimes of Hophni and Phinehas, and the imbecility of their father. If it was not

of God, it was false from the first; if it was of God, He could prove it to be His, and prove that He was not dependent upon the order, but the order upon Him. Man breaks the course of his obedience; he will not believe that God is with him of a truth. Then God shows him that He is. He does not allow him to remain in his delusion, to shut his eyes and fancy that he is unseen.

III. There are two methods in which this revelation of the reality of things was made to Israel at this time: (1) by the call of Samuel; (2) by retribution. The righteous Judge of the world shows that the world cannot go on without Him; that priests who try to establish their rule as if they had one of their own and were not merely His servants, must of all men pay the penalty of their sin and unbelief. The people whom they have perverted into godlessness must taste the fruit of their godlessness. The Philistines came against Israel—the ark was taken. But God was the same wherever the ark might be. He still spoke out His judgments and His prophecies by Samuel's voice. In due time, having proved that the nation lived only in Him and by Him, He gave it health and restoration.

F. D. MAURICE, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 336.

Chap. iii., ver. 18.—"And he said, It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

I. NOTICE first the history and fate of Eli. (1) Observe his amiability and kindness, shown in his readily retracting his opinion of Hannah and changing the language of uncharitableness into that of benediction. (2) Observe the piety of Eli. What meek submission is discernible in his exclamation when, through the instrumentality of Samuel, the destruction of himself and of his father's house was predicted! "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." (3) Eli was a good man, a pious man, but he was weak and indolent, and in consequence he did not discharge with vigour the duties of an office which he might have declined, and the emoluments of which he enjoyed, the further consequence being a great detriment to the public affairs of the Church and nation over which he presided. (4) For this Eli met with the punishment he deserved; he sacrificed his duty for the sake of peace, and notwithstanding his sacrifice he found trouble; his grey hairs were brought in sorrow to the grave.

II. Consider the early years of Samuel. (1) Samuel, young as he was, seems alone in Eli's house to have been conscientiously doing his duty, and among the revealed dealings of God with man we find this to have been a general rule, that God selected as His immediate agents persons who had been previously prepared by moral discipline for the work for which He designed them. (2) In this preparation of Samuel, although something depended on himself, yet in some things he was also dependent on others. It was Hannah who brought him to the house of the Lord when he was yet young. His piety, though an acquisition, was also an inheritance. He was supported by her prayers as well as his own; her precept and example had influence over him; he was indebted to Eli also. By our actions we help one another; by our prayers we are to help one another. No man liveth unto himself. Man, from his very birth, is linked to man.

W. F. Hook, *Parish Sermons*, p. 21.

References: iii. 19.—J. Harrison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 49; R. M. McCheyne, *Additional Remains*, p. 81. iii. 19-21.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 185.

Chap. iii., ver. 20.—"And all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord."

An Italy once, an India twice, have succumbed to a boyish resolve. In the higher sphere, that of conquest in the intellectual world, it is mere matter of necessity that to be a great poet scholar, or orator, must have been the boy's resolve before it was the man's reward. Careers like these must be chosen by the open eyes of boyhood, must be pursued with all its vivid forces. Again, in the higher spiritual world how young have been most of our chieftains, the saints of heaven, at the time when their choice was made and proclaimed. It has often been noticed how young the great leaders of European Christendom have ever been.

I. Notice first that in the text we have a resolution, and a young resolution.

II. The second point is what Samuel resolved to do, and at what time. To be a prophet of the Lord seems to imply such grace from heaven, such free-will on the part of God—God everything, man nothing. And perhaps we may be liable to forget that the man may be prepared and fitted for his work or otherwise, and that by the line which he has himself taken. Samuel gave himself up to be what God would have him to be, to be that in the best way and in the most perfect degree.

III. The history is not the history of countries or of Churches only. It is the history of the cause of God, and there is no place, no society, in which the cause of God does not go through the self-same phases, maintained and counteracted; and when should boyish resolve more affect the Church of God than as it works in our society?

IV. It is inconsistency on our part which weakens the cause of our Master in any place. We must be established, we must be faithful, to be servants of the Lord. (1) No one can serve God without prayer. Prayer is the means of obtaining that strength which is our chief want. (2) A second point is friendship. Mere ordinary friendships do good on the whole, but how much more would they do if there were a little resolve, a little more holding yourselves and your friends true to principles which you respect, and if you established yourselves to be true friends to each other.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 11.

REFERENCES: iii. 21.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 60. iv. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 186; Parker, vol. vi., p. 259; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 278; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 255. iv. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 60.

Chap. iv., vers. 10, 11.—"So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts," etc. (with v. 7 and 2 Sam. vi. 15).

I. LOOK first at the connection between declension and defeat, at the root of the calamity which befell the nation and the dishonour to the cause of God. There was a deep moral apostasy. (1) The character of the priesthood had become thoroughly corrupt, and this is one of the most ominous signs that can appear in any society. (2) Another feature of declension in the people of Israel was that they had changed their religion into a formal superstition. After their first defeat by the Philistines they began to think of higher help. But it was not of God they thought, the living God, but only of the ark. The ark has been changed into a fetish; the name of it is to be their deliverer. When religion comes to this, it sinks into a hideous idol, and the petrified shell must be broken in pieces if the spirit is to be saved. (3) There is a further stage in the ark's history before it reaches its lowest fall. It has been dissociated from the living God, and has become not merely a common, but a desecrated, thing. To redeem the Israelites from

their error, they must learn that the ark is powerless if God forsakes them, and that the symbol cannot save without the living presence. In this stern lesson God uses their enemies as teachers. In this case the Philistines were on the better side. It was not man against God, but man against falsehood under His name, and the battle ended as one might anticipate. Natural human courage proved itself stronger than corrupted religion, and hypocrisy was broken and scattered.

II. Look next at God's victory. It is when men think they have gained a victory over God that they are on the edge of sore disaster. What to do with God is the world's great trial, as what to do with Jesus was the difficulty of Pilate. For the world cannot make God to its mind, and in the end the world cannot do without Him. It carries His ark hither and thither, seeks to bring Him to the level of its own conceptions, to subject Him to its own idols, but finds in all its efforts no true rest till it suffers Him to take His own way to His throne. Notice: (1) The only obedience which God accepts is that which is given Him out of love, and for His own sake. (2) If the ark is to find its true place, it must be committed to the hands of men who love it.

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 162.

REFERENCES: iv. 10, 11.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 37. iv. 12-18.—J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 62. iv. 13.—R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters and Miscellanies*, pp. 320, 336; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 365; W. Morley Punshon, *Four Popular Discourses*, 2nd series, No. IV. iv. 21.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 60.

Chap. iv., ver. 22.—"The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken."

WE do not know her name, nor her years, nor her previous career, this poor broken-hearted woman who died with these words on her lips. No doubt her short life had had its blinks of sunshine, but she abides in our memory an image of the deepest tragedy, and after these few minutes of supreme anguish she goes back to the silence whence she came. There is something that comes very straight to our sympathy in the picture of one fairly beaten, one who has quite given up, broken-hearted. It was not with this woman the passing despondency through which human beings get again into the cheerful sunshine. With her it was the last of this life; and thus giving up, she died.

I. We see in the wife of Phinehas both piety and patriotism.

Putting aside her own individual losses, she summed up what had killed her in one woeful wail: "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken." There are some, indeed, who, in circumstances as desperate as those of Israel on that black day, would have risen to the need of the occasion and gone, with heart and soul, to the work of setting things right again. Such was Luther; such was Knox. But there are few indeed to whom God has given such strength and courage.

II. The great lesson conveyed by the text is that the glory of a nation depends on God's presence with it; that is, on its religious character, on its solemn holding by what is right and abhorring what is wrong.

III. The glory was departed from Israel when the ark of God was taken. That was the emblem, the flower, the culmination, of all the national faith and consecration. The loss of the mere wooden chest was nothing, except as a reminder of the vital and essential loss of God's presence which had gone before. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; it is the earnest reality of the worship that alone avails; the outward form, except as it expresses the spirit and is instinct with it, profits nothing at all.

A. K. H. B., *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 57.

REFERENCES: v. 2-4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1342. v. 4.—A. Scott. *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 237. v. 7.—J. Ker, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 162. vi. 9.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 257 vi. 20.—Bishop Thirlwall, *Good Words*, 1876, p. 17. vii. 3.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 269. vii. 8.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 140. vii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 500, and *Morning by Morning*, p. 365; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 201. vii. 15-17.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 206 vii. 17.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 61.

Chap. viii., vers. 4-8.—"Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy way; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations," etc.

THE Book of Kings is also the Book of Samuel, not merely because the individual man was the last of the judges and poured the anointing oil upon the first two of the kings, but because he represented in his own person a power and a position which were quite different from theirs, and yet which could not be rightly understood apart from theirs.

I. Samuel was a witness that a hereditary priesthood derives all its worth from a Divine presence, which is not shut up in it or limited by it, and that without that presence it means nothing and is nothing, nay, becomes worse than nothing, a plague and cancer in the society, poisoning its very heart, spreading disease and death through it.

II. The signal downfall of the nation which took place in Samuel's day, when the ark, the symbol of the people's unity, was captured by the Philistines, prepared the way for great national changes. Samuel's reformation awakened in the people a sense of order to which they had been strangers before. But Samuel's sons did not walk in his ways. They were self-seekers; they were suspected of taking bribes. The effect of this distrust was just that which proceeds in all ages from the same cause—dissatisfaction, a cry for change, a feeling that the fault of the person who administers implies some evil or defect in that which he has to administer. The degeneracy of Samuel's sons made the people long for a different sort of rule, for one which should be less irregular and fluctuating.

III. The request for a king displeased Samuel because he had a sense that there was something wrong in the wish of his countrymen. He may have felt their ingratitude to himself; he may have thought that his government was better than any they were likely to substitute for it.

IV. God's answer to Samuel's prayer was a very strange one. "Hearken unto them, for they have rejected Me. Let them have their way, seeing that they are not changing a mere form of government, but breaking loose from the principle upon which their nation has stood from its foundation." The Jews were asking for heavy punishments, which they needed, without which the evil that was in them could not have been brought to light or cured. But beneath their dark counterfeit image of a king was hidden the image of a true King reigning in righteousness, who would not judge after the sight of His eye nor reprove after the hearing of His ear, but would smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips would slay the wicked.

F. D. MAURICE, *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: viii. 5.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 280. viii. 6.—*Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 62. viii. 6-9.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 237. viii. 19.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*,

vol. ii., p. 422. viii. 22.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 62. viii.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 118. ix. 11-13.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. vi., p. 245. ix. 20.—H. Hayman, *Sermons Preached in Rugby School Chapel*, p. 29. ix. 27.—J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*, p. 17; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1547; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 62. ix.—W. Hanna, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 21. x. 6.—Parker, vol. vii., p 63. x. 9.—*Ibid*, vol. vi., p. 290. x. 12.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 62; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 284. x. 24.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 299. x. 26.—J. Burns, *Sketches of Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 153. x.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 71; W. Hanna, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 105; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 167. xi. 14.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 64. xi.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 305. xii. 1.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 14. xii. 1, 2.—S. W. Skeffington, *Our Sins or Our Saviour*, p. 214; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 28. xii. 1-25.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 336. xii. 2, 3.—J. R. Macduff, *Good Words*, 1862, p. 524; *Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 681. xii. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 65. xii. 10.—*Ibid.*, p. 66. xii. 12.—Bishop Woodford, *Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament*, p. 66. xii. 14.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 125. xii. 16, 19.—W. Spensley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 59. xii. 17.—R. Heber, *Parish Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 25.

Chap. xii., ver. 20.—"And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart."

It is the special and most perilous curse of sin that it obscures, or blots out altogether, or terribly distorts the vision of God in our hearts; it gradually reduces us to that most desolate of all conditions "having no hope and without God in the world."

I. Those who need friends most are those who have fallen most and are in the most sore condition; but if even man despises and finds no forgiveness for our faults, is there any hope that He in whose sight the very heavens are not clean—that He will pity us, and take us to His breast, and suffer us to live in the glory of His presence? Will He, who is the Friend of the innocent, be a Friend of the guilty too?

II. God loathes our sins, but knowing that we are but dust, He loves our souls. He sent His Son to seek and save the lost. When that blessed Son had taken our nature upon Him, He lived with the aged and the withered, the homeless and the diseased, with the palsied and the demoniac, with the ignorant and the blind.

III. Each new day is to you a new chance. Return to God and use it rightly, letting the time past of your life suffice you to have walked in the hard ways of sin and shame. The mis-

takes, the follies, the sins, the calamities, of the past may, if you use them rightly, be the pitying angels to guide you through the future. If you put off the present time for repentance, the convenient season may never come. As yet the door stands open before you; very soon it will be too late, and the door be shut.

F. W. FARRAR, *The Fall of Man*, p. 364

NOTICE four things:—

I. We have sinned some sins which we cannot repair. God, in His great love, takes us still as we are; takes us back to His bosom; only asks one thing: that at least we will go on in simplicity and sincerity now.

II. Though the temporal punishment may remain, it yet may be no sign that the sin is unforgiven. It is a difficulty in our way raised by ourselves. God takes us back though we are fallen. Let us serve Him still, though the vigour of the old days is gone.

III. This punishment is a sign, a sure sign, of destruction following unforgiven sin. If God so punish those whom He receives as repentant, what will befall us if we repent not? Surely nothing else than that "we shall be consumed."

IV. What an argument with us ought His long-suffering to be! What peace is in the thought of forgiveness so large, so full, so free, as God has promised! Not friends, nor repose, nor confession, nor resolution avails anything without the very presence of God; but each of these things in Him may work us weal, and He in them can bring us absolution and perfect peace.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 227.

REFERENCES: xii. 20.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 105; E. H. Plumptre, *King's College Sermons*, p. 60.

Chap. xii., ver. 23.—"Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

NOTICE: (1) Some of the reasons for intercessory prayer, and (2) some of its encouragements.

I. Why is intercessory prayer a great thing? (1) St. Paul lays it down as a positive command, and makes it the primary obligation of every Christian. (2) We are never walking so exactly and so closely in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as when we are praying for any one. (3) We never more effectually benefit ourselves than when we pray for others. (4) We have

no talent of greater usefulness than the talent of intercessory prayer. Every other channel of good is circumscribed, and illness and absence take their place. But this has no limit. Wherever we are, under whatever circumstances, we can do it; and in doing it, we can reach those otherwise perfectly inaccessible to us—the guiltiest and the farthest off from God.

II. The encouragements to intercessory prayer are also four. (1) The first lies in the character of God, that all we bring in are dear to Him, that "He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should be saved," and that it must be a thing very dear to God when one of His children brings another of His children and lays that child at their common Father's feet. (2) The second great encouragement is in the fact that there is never a commandment in which there is not rolled up a promise. We have seen that it is commanded, "Pray for one another;" we safely argue that it would never have been commanded if it were not in God's mind to grant the thing which we are told to ask. (3) Thirdly, the general promise of prayer is exceedingly large. Whatsoever is of faith is sure. The success of that prayer is covenanted. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." (4) Fourthly, almost all our Lord's miracles were done in answer to intercessory prayer. There is no positive promise to intercessory prayer, but, short of the actual undertaking of God, there is everything to give hope and all but certainty when we ask for any one of those things which we know are after the mind of God to give to His children, and which Christ has purchased with His own blood.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 333.

REFERENCES: xii. 23.—J. Harrison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 49; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1537; J. Keble, *Sermons, Academical and Occasional*, p. 127. xii. 23-25.—G. R. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 253. xii.—Parker, vol. vi. p. 315. xiii. 1.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 164. xiii. 3.—J. M Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 269. xiii. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 67.

Chap. xiii., vers. 8-10 (with 1 Tim. i. 16).—"And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him," etc. KING SAUL had been expressly charged to await the coming of the prophet to offer an offering in Gilgal. It was a trial of fidelity and obedience. If Saul really believed that the direction was from God, and if he was really anxious to obey God, he would have waited. The seven days ran their course, and there

was no sign of Samuel's approach. The king's resolution gave way. He offered the burnt offering, and scarcely had he done so when Samuel came.

I. Saul fell on this occasion through the operation of a principle which is natural to all of us—the principle of impatience.

How many errors, faults, and sins in our lives spring out of this source. We scarcely ever do a thing in a hurry without having afterwards to regret it. Impatience is always a waste of time; it almost always has to be made up for; sometimes, too often—and this is far worse—it cannot be made up for. Sometimes out of a little momentary act of haste springs a misunderstanding never to be cleared up, a quarrel never to be reconciled, an injustice never to be repaired.

II. Most of all is this working of the mind seen, as it was seen in King Saul, when there is not only a lurking imprudence, but also a lurking disobedience. Saul showed the strength of his impatience by letting it interfere with and overbear a plain command of God. In the hurry and eagerness, the impatience and the fretfulness, which too often drive us on, the sense of right is easily put aside and suppressed.

III. If Christ were like us in this prevailing habit of impatience, what would become of us? What a temptation there would be to close our day of grace, which, alas! for so many of us is rather a day of mischief! If He dealt with us as the very best of us deal with one another, there is not a man upon earth who would live to grow up. But the patience of Christ still calls us to repentance. Seeing Him as He is, we shall gradually become like Him, till at last the impatience of man is lost in the long-suffering of Christ.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Memorials of Harrow Sundays*, p. 397.

Chap. xiii., ver. 9.—"And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering."

SAUL is an instance of a man whom God blessed and proved, whom He put on his trial, and who, like Adam, was found wanting. If he had waited one hour more before offering the sacrifice, he would have been saved this sin; in other words, he would have succeeded in his trial instead of failing. He was disobedient, and in consequence he forfeited God's favour. We are, like Saul, favoured by God's free grace; we are all tried in one way or another, and many of us fall like Saul.

I. How many are there who, in distress of any kind, in want of means or of necessaries, forget, like Saul, that their distress,

whatever it is, comes from God; that God brings it on them, and that God will remove it in His own way if they trust in Him; but who, instead of waiting for His time, take their own bad way, and impatiently hasten the time, and thus bring on themselves judgment.

II. Again, how many are there who when in unpleasant situations are tempted to do what is wrong in order to get out of them, instead of patiently waiting God's time.

III. How many are there who, though their hearts are not right before God, yet have some sort of religiousness, and by it deceive themselves into the idea that they are religious. Saul in his way was a religious man, in *his* way, but not in God's way; he considered his very disobedience an act of religion. He offered sacrifice rather than go to battle without a sacrifice. Thus he deceived himself, and thus many men deceive themselves now, not casting off religion altogether, but choosing their religion for themselves and fancying they are religious without being obedient.

IV. How many are there who bear half the trial God puts upon them, but not the whole of it, who go on well for a time and then fall away. Saul bore on for seven days, and fainted not; on the eighth day his faith failed him. It is not enough to get through one temptation well; through our whole life we are on trial.

V. How many are there who, in a narrow, grudging, cold-hearted way, go by the letter of God's commandments, while they neglect the spirit. Saul fulfilled Samuel's directions literally and rigidly, but not in the spirit of love. With a word Samuel reproved and convicted, silenced, and sentenced him.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. v., p. 188 (see also J. H. Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 33.

REFERENCE: xiii. 13.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 219.

Chap. xiii., vers. 13, 14.—"And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which He commanded thee," etc.

I. THE impression which Saul makes upon the average reader, at least at first, is beyond all question a favourable impression. He had many of those qualifications which always go to make a man popular. (1) His personal appearance was such as commands admiration from a large number of people in all generations. He was before all things a soldier. (2) To his

personal appearance and martial habits Saul added undoubted courage and resolution. (3) He had higher qualities even than these, or he would never have been regarded with the affection he inspired first in Samuel and then in David. He was both modest and generous, and his reign was on the whole, and in the civil or political sense, a benefit to his country.

II. When we turn to the character of David, we find in it dark traits which the Bible makes no attempt to disguise. And yet, in contrast with Saul, he has on him from the first the notes of God's special approval. We must therefore ask, What was especially wanting in Saul? Saul gives no evidence of having upon and within him the permanent influence of religion, of having anything that we could call the fear and love of God in his heart. David, in spite of his grievous faults, had on his heart and conscience continually the impress of the majesty, the tenderness, the encompassing presence, of God. It is better to have our part with David than with Saul, with a loyalty to God that is not always consistent rather than with an outward propriety that is never really loyal.

H. P. LIDDON, *Family Churchman*, July 21st, 1886 (see also *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1161).

REFERENCES: xiii. 13, 14.—Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 136; S. Wilberforce, *Sermons before the University of Oxford*, 1863, p. 63; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 352.

Chap. xiii., ver. 14.—"The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart."

THIS expression clung to David, as "The Friend of God" became the title of Abraham. Yet no words have given rise to so many fierce invectives; none perhaps carry on their front more serious difficulties. We must remember in connection with this title and David's apparent unworthiness of it: (1) That it is plain by a reference to the context that the title "after God's own heart" was only comparative, not absolute. By the side of Saul, David was the man who attracted the favour of God. (2) The title was given him in his early days, before his life had become overcast with the cloud of sin and error. (3) David's repentance was far more deep than appears on the surface of the narrative. (4) It is most necessary to bear in mind, in considering the career of David, the severity of punishment which followed upon David's sin.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 67 (see also *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 364).

REFERENCES: xiii. 14.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *A Course of Sermons*

for the Christian Year, p. 300. xiii. 19.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol ii., p. 31. xiii. 19, 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 342. xiii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 62.

Chap. xiii., ver. 22.—"So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people."

THE history of the relations of the Jews with their neighbours and their foes is typical of the existing relations of the Christian and the world. This history is therefore a personal matter to all of us. The wretched Hebrews had been disarmed by the Philistines, their most persistent foes. The very implements of husbandry had to be taken for repairs to the anvil of the enemy. It is impossible to imagine a more hopeless state of affairs: all the instruments of warfare on one side; all forethought, all prudence, all resolution, on one side. We see the triumphant scorn of the heathen, the sullen despair of the Israelite, and we reflect with wonder that to this state God's people had fallen.

I. We may expect that Satan will strive to disarm us. We may also expect that in some cases he will succeed. With this history before our eyes, it need not surprise us if Christians sharpen their ploughshares at Satan's workshops. It need not surprise us if the maxims of business, if the rules of prudence, if the conventionalities of society, are not much influenced by the rule of life laid down by Christ, but are dictated by a selfish, exclusive spirit.

II. This state of the Hebrews is easily accounted for. They had been idolatrous, depraved, and torn by civil strife. They were also wrapped up in money-making. They were busy in everything but the chief concern of life. We see here revealed the extent and the nature of the power of sin. Sin may be so persisted in as to render recovery hopeless. Satan disarms us, and there is neither sword nor spear in our hand.

III. With every one of us the process of arming or disarming is daily going on. Christ is above, but He sees us here below, and will buckle His own armour upon us. He will give us the armour with which He foiled the tempter, the armour with which He withstood and defeated every temptation that can befall His people.

F. CASE, *Short Practical Sermons*, p. 62.

REFERENCE: xiii., xiv.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 323.

Chap. xiv.

THESE were evil days for the people of Israel. But it was in these dark days that Jonathan shone so famous. It is yet true

that difficulties prove our mettle, and that the greater the hardship or peril, the more is the victory worth telling. We learn from this chapter—

I. That the presence of the enemy should rouse our courage. Jonathan could not allow the Philistines to be even at Michmash, strong as it was, without ever striking a blow. Is there not need for more chivalry among the soldiers of Christ?

II. It was Jonathan who conceived the plan of attacking the Philistines, which leads us to say that princes should set the example. It is a shame when a private has to lead a forlorn hope, and yet too often in Church history we find the poor and ignorant more full of zeal for God than the rich and learned.

III. Earnest leaders should not lack brave followers. We are not told the name of the young man who was Jonathan's armour-bearer, but he was worthy of the situation. The best of leaders is all the better for the knowledge that his followers will not fail him. Let those of us whose place is not to lead yet help our Commander by acting, so that whenever He looks at us He will see our faces say, "I am with Thee according to Thine heart."

IV. Jonathan knew that God can win by a minority. If, in fighting the Lord's battles, we wait till we can outnumber the foe, we shall never do exploits. Joshua and Caleb were outvoted, but they said, "Let us go up and possess it." The fewer there are, the more room for Omnipotence. The units of Christian workers are the thin edge of the wedge.

V. At the battle of Michmash, we have been taught that God helps those who help themselves. God works by means, and delights in co-operating with His people. Do not wait till the enemy has fled, but turn the battle by your bravery, even if it be by a single hand.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 255.

REFERENCES: xiv. 6.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. i., p. 37. xiv. 24.—W. Hanna, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 281.

Chap. xiv., vers. 43, 44.—"Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die," etc.

SAUL had a right to give this general order that there should be no stopping; that that day should be dedicated to the overthrow of the enemy; that no man should taste food. And yet

In this, as in all Saul's conduct, there was a certain excess—an immoderation which carried it to rashness. For while, as a general order, it was wise, to make it special and particular was not wise. Jonathan made the poorest plea for a good cause that was ever made. Instead of saying, "I did not know your commands;" instead of saying, "Under God's providence, the time came when that command ought to have been set aside for the sake of destroying the Philistines"—instead of saying these things, he said, "I did but taste a *little* honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand."

I. A little thing is always enough for disobedience. Besides, there was in his heart the idea that moral quality depended in some sense upon magnitude. Little things become important as a part of a series—that is, by aggregation. They collect and become powerful unities.

II. A little thing, or that which men call little, may be very trifling indeed for one purpose and in one direction; and yet for another purpose and in another direction it may be extremely potent.

III. Single actions may be insignificant, and yet by repetition may become well-nigh omnipotent.

IV. There are times when the soul stands at equipoise, and when it will take very little to carry down the scale. At such times we must be careful of little things. The breaking off of one bad habit may be the first of a series of steps which will lead to a spiritual change.

H. W. BEECHER, *Sermons*, 5th series, p. 147.

REFERENCES: xiv. 6.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 68. xiv. 14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 521. xiv. 27.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 1. xiv. 37.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 68. xiv. 44.—*Ibid.*, p. 69. xiv. 52.—*Ibid.*, p. 70. xiv.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 356.

Chap. xv. (with 1 Tim. i. 19).

THE story of Saul is among the saddest which Scripture anywhere contains.

I. Notice first the singular elements of nobleness which are to be traced in his natural character, so that his moral stature did not altogether belie the stateliness of his outward frame. There is nothing which so often oversets the whole balance of a mind, which brings out faults unsuspected before, as a sudden and abrupt elevation from a very low to a very high position. But Saul gives no token that the change has wrought this mischief

in him. The Lord's anointed, Israel's king, he bides his time, returns with a true simplicity to humblest offices in his father's house. He would gladly, and that out of a genuine modesty, hide and withdraw himself from the people's choice. Slights and offences done to himself he magnanimously overlooks. He ventures his life far for the people whom he rules, as one who has rightly understood that foremost in place and honour means also foremost in peril and toil. Saul is clear from every charge of that sin which left the darkest blot upon David's life; seems very sparingly to have allowed himself that licence which almost all Oriental monarchs have so largely claimed. There was in him also a true capacity for loving. Of David we are told he "loved him greatly." Even at his worst, what glimpses of a better mind from time to time appear! The deep discords of his spirit are not incapable of being subdued into harmonies, as sweet bells jangled or out of tune which for an instant, though, alas! but for an instant, recover their sweetness. And, most noticeable of all, the love which he could feel he could also inspire. If then there was a shipwreck here, they were not paltry wares, but treasures of great price, which went down into the deep.

II. The history of Saul brings home to us these facts: (1) That the life we now live is a life of probation; that God takes men and puts them in certain conditions to try them. We are each upon our trial as certainly as Saul was upon his. (2) All the finer qualities of Saul display themselves at the outset of his career; they gradually fade and fail from him, pride meanwhile, and defiance of God coming in their room, until at last of and caprice, and jealousy, and envy, and an open contempt all the high qualities which he once owned, only the courage, last gift to forsake a man, often abiding when every other has departed—until this only remains. (3) We learn from Saul not to build on any good thing which we have in ourselves. Let us bring that good thing to God and receive it back from God, with that higher consecration which He alone can give.

R. C. TRENCH, *Shipwrecks of Faith*, p. 31.

REFERENCES: xv. 1-9.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 179. xv. 1-24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 343. xv. 3.—S. Baring-Gould, *Plain Preaching to Poor People*, p. 109; J. Percival, *Some Helps for School Life*, p. 135. xv. 10-35.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 302.

Chap. xv., ver. 11.—"It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments."

I. SAUL'S character is marked by much that is considered to be of the highest moral excellence—generosity, magnanimity, calmness, energy, and decision. He is introduced to us as a "choice young man and a goodly," and as possessed of a striking personal presence, and as a member of a wealthy and powerful family. It is probable from the sequel of Saul's history that the apparent nobleness of his first actions was connected with some wrong principles and feelings, which then existed only in their seeds, but which afterwards sprang up and ripened to his destruction.

II. Sight prevailed over the faith of Balaam; a more subtle, though not a rare, temptation overcame the faith of Saul: wilfulness, the unaccountable desire of acting short of simple obedience to God's will, a repugnance of unreserved self-surrender and submission to Him. By wilful resistance to God's will, he opened the door to those evil passions which till then, at the utmost only served to make his character unamiable, without stamping it with guilt. Derangement was the consequence of disobedience. The wilfulness which first resisted God next preyed upon itself, as a natural principle of disorder; his moods and changes, his compunctions and relapses, what were they but the convulsions of the spirit when the governing power was lost?

III. In contemplating the miserable termination of his history, we observe how clearly the failure of the Divine purpose which takes place in it is attributable to man. No one could be selected more suitable in talents or conduct for maintaining political power at home than the reserved, mysterious monarch whom God gave to His people; none more suitable for striking terror into the surrounding nations than a commander gifted with his coolness and promptitude in action. But he fell from his election because of unbelief, because he would take another part, and not the very part which was actually assigned him in the decrees of the Most High.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Sermons on the theory of Religious Belief*, p. 146.

REFERENCES: xv. 11.—Parker, vol. vi., p. 330; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 93; J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 63. xv. 14.—J. Edmunds, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 111.

Chap. xv., vers. 20, 21.—"And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me," etc.

It will appear somewhat startling to any one who first notices it how very little is said in the Bible about truthfulness. The reason is that truthfulness is not a strictly religious duty; it is a duty which is entirely independent of faith in God or Christ, a duty which is so absolutely necessary to the very existence of society, that without reverence for it no community could last for a day. The word of God passes by those things which men can find out for themselves, and does not insist on those duties which the common interests of commerce and security and comfort are sure to enforce.

I. It is most important to notice with regard to this passage in Saul's life that, taking the words as they stand, there was probably no absolute falsehood in them. Nothing is more probable than that the people did take of the spoil to sacrifice unto the Lord, and that at any rate it was very nearly true that Saul had utterly destroyed the Amalekites. And yet, after all, in God's sight, with all this semblance of veracity, the unhappy king stood up as a convicted liar, who, with his reddening cheek and his stammering tongue, was being put to shame before all his people. He did not dare to lie outright. He would not quite confess his guilt, but he dressed up a lie in the garb of truth, and took his chance of getting off his punishment by a paltry subterfuge.

II. Saul is only a type of a million others who have done the like again and again in all times. It is the hardest thing in life to be true, and the rarest. To state the simplest fact with perfect simplicity, to explain our most innocent motive with exact honesty, are feats which will often baffle the most sincere among us. Truth is not natural. It is not common. It is not easily learnt; only by watchfulness and prayer can it be learnt at all. The first temptation was but a piece of cheating; the traitor Judas acted a lie when he gave his Master that false kiss in Gethsemane, and ever since then falsehood has been Satan's chosen weapon for plucking Christ's children out of their Saviour's hands and robbing them of that heaven where only the true can live.

A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 43.

Chap. xv., ver. 22.—"Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

We can hardly read the history of Saul without some feeling of pity. He was no tyrant, who made himself king and ruled the people against their will. On the contrary, he was chosen by God Himself, was anointed by God's prophet, and became king at the express desire of the people. He was a brave and noble man, too; he led the Israelites against their enemies, and, by God's help, was victorious over them. There were, indeed, terrible blots on his character; his persecution of David for mere jealousy was base and wicked cruelty; nevertheless, when we read his sad history, we cannot fail to be moved with pity for one who was so great and so unhappy.

I. The words of the text contain a lesson which Saul had never learned. He served God and appeared zealous in His cause so far as the way of doing this suited his own pleasure and purposes, but whenever self had to be denied and God's will made the rule of action instead of his own, then he rebelled. In fact, Saul never really worshipped God at all, he worshipped *self*, and he never learned this great truth: that obedience to God is the only thing pleasing in His eyes.

II. Saul stands to us as a type of those who profess to be Christians and act in a measure as Christians, and who, nevertheless, follow their own ways, just as if they were under no Christian vows at all. They have never learnt the great Gospel lesson of obedience, nor seen that obedience to God requires self-denial and discipline of ourselves. Faith and obedience are necessary parts of each other; there can be no obedience without faith, and faith without obedience is dead.

III. We have been received as the *soldiers* of Christ, and this comparison of a Christian to a soldier will show us very well what our obedience ought to be, for a soldier has no will of his own; his first and principal lesson is that of obedience; whatever service of danger he may be called upon to perform, he has no choice but to obey. This is the kind of obedience we are to yield; not an occasional act, but a constant battle against ourselves and against the evil nature that is in us, and a constant striving to root out all desires and thoughts which are contrary to the will of God.

Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, 1st series, p. 195.

I. All obedience belongs primarily to God. The one Fountain of all good must be the single centre of all service. Thus far obedience is an instinct. The creature owes it to its Creator, the preserved to the Preserver, the family to the one great Parent of us all.

II. The question is not whether we *will* obey God. God is far too strong and absolute a God for that. Every creature which He has ever made shall and will obey Him. The question is only how we obey, and when. Shall it be a violent compulsion or a voluntary act of filial devotion? The true motive, the essence, of obedience God tells us when He says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." To love is to obey, and the measure of the obedience is the degree of the affection. That affection is generated only by close contact with the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Obedience does not consist in isolated acts; it is an atmosphere, it is a necessity, it is the breathing of a new existence, and it is the beginning of immortality.

IV. There is no happiness like the happiness of obedience. Adam was made to rule. The Fall has altered it, and now every man's dignity and every man's joy is in service. Man never fulfils his destiny but when he obeys. Therefore, in His great mercy, God has so placed every one of us, from the greatest to the least, that we have some one over us whom we have to obey. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 228.

References: **xv.** 22.—Dawson, *Sermons on Daily Life and Duty*, p. 286; H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 390; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 118; J. Harrison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 49; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 686, and *Evening by Evening*, p. 294; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 55; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 34; S. Leathes, *Truth and Life*, p. 115; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 21.

Chap. xv., ver. 23.—"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

I. At the end of 1 Samuel viii., we find all arranged by the Divine command for a king being appointed over Israel, and at the beginning of chapter ix. we first read of Saul. His bodily stature and personal beauty prepossess us in his favour, and as the story goes on his good sense and modesty increase the prepossession. When chosen to the kingdom, we find him with a band of men whose hearts God had touched; and when the children of Belial said, "How shall this man save us?" he held

his peace. We can hardly conceive a more promising commencement to a reign, or one more calculated to gather power and work deliverance for Israel. Saul's is just the character of many a young man, full of high and noble feeling, modest, and distrustful of self, coming from a religious home or the influence of religious impressions, and placed in a post of responsibility, of activity. All is promise; we look for high distinction of the best kind, and for bright and blessed deeds for God and for good.

II. In the thirteenth chapter it appears that during the first two years of Saul's reign the man of grace in him had been waning, the man of nature had been waxing stronger. The tendency of the man was to emancipate himself from God's law and make himself supreme, to follow his own bent and natural impulse, to the setting aside of God's positive commands. Saul desired to be his own master, and he was left to himself by God. (1) The first thought which occurs to us is this: in this its first king, as in a mirror, behold Israel itself. Israel, like Saul, has turned to his own way. Because he hath rejected the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected him from being king. (2) The second thought is: in this character, behold multitudes among ourselves reflected. How many there are with whom everything for time and for eternity trembles in the balance, and the question is whether they will serve the Lord in life or whether they will not. How many follow the example of Saul. They live for the world, and by degrees God's grace is quenched; there is remorse behind and misery before, death inexorable and coming on with rapid strides, and eternity a dismal blank, the thought of which carries terror to the soul.

III. This picture of ourselves should teach us two especial cautions: (1) against forgetfulness of God; (2) against self-will.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 44.

REFERENCE: xv. 23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 16.

Chap. xv., ver. 24.—"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."

No man, surely, should dare depend upon God's temporal favours or upon the friendship of the best of men after reading of the sin and punishment of Saul, who failed so sadly at last, though he was made king of Israel by the especial provi-

dence of God, and though he had the constant affection and intercession of so good a man as Samuel. If men will not labour to keep their own hearts in the right place, it is not either in God or man to do them good against their will.

I. It was not for any one act of disobedience that the Almighty rejected Saul; it was on account of the temper and disposition which he showed in acting as he did, and which made him particularly unfit to be king over such a people as the Israelites. Saul's commission was above all things to put down that spirit of mistrust and rebellion which prevailed among his subjects, instead of which he allowed himself to be carried away by mere heathen feelings and to act as a mere heathen prince.

II. Saul's way of excusing himself to Samuel proves his heart to have been in the wrong, to have been, indeed, utterly destitute of the sincere love of God. If he might but have preserved his kingdom, the loss of God's approbation would have made little or no difference to him. The temptation which led him wrong was his regarding the praise and favour of the people more than the praise and favour of God.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. iv., p. 124.

REFERENCES: xv. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 113; Parker, vol. vii., p. 71 (see also J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 138).

Chap. xv., vers. 24, 30.

WE have here the confession of a backsliding man, going down the slope of sin at the same time that these godly words were on his lips. Saul was on the incline, and these words, spiritless and untrue, only precipitated him further.

It was one of those strange reactions of which the experience of every man is full that he who began in shyness committed his first great recorded sin in presumption.

Saul's confession had not reality. There was no religion in it. It was simply remorse, the child of fear. It curried favour with man, and it sought to appease God for a temporal end. Notice some of the marks of a spurious confession. (1) It does not isolate itself, as true confession always does. (2) It seeks honour from men rather than from God. (3) It gives a religious cloak to sin. "He did it to sacrifice to the Lord."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 85.

REFERENCES: xv. 32.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 425. xv. 32-35.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol.

xiii., p. 260. xv. 35.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 93.

Chap. xvi., ver. 1.—"Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons."

Consider: I. The reason of Saul's rejection from the throne of Israel. Saul's failure may be traced to three things. (1) He was a disobedient king. (2) He was an untruthful king. (3) He was a hypocritical king.

II. The manner of David's appointment to the throne of Israel. The want of the age was a truly devout man, with a strong hand and a brave heart. Three things in this undertaking of Samuel's claim attention. (1) It was a dangerous mission. (2) It was a responsible mission. (3) It was a successful mission.

III. The declaration of David's fitness for the throne of Israel. "I have provided Me a king among his sons." The secret of David's success is explained by three things. (1) There was a Divine choice. (2) There was a Divine preparation. (3) There was a Divine calling. God makes the choice, qualifies the man, and appoints the office.

Parker, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 23.

References: xvi. 1.—F. M Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 1; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 93. xvi. 1-13.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 1; *Sunday Magazine*, 1886, p. 28.

Chap. xvi., ver. 7.—"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

I. God's knowledge of human nature, according to the passage before us, is immediate and direct.

II. Being immediate and direct, God's knowledge of man is perfect.

III. Because God's knowledge is direct and perfect, it surpasses men's knowledge of each other and of themselves.

Consider: IV. The life-lessons yielded by the text. (1) The folly of permitted self-delusion. (2) The utter uselessness of all hypocrisy. (3) The exposed position of all our sins. (4) The duty of being passive under Divine discipline. (5) The reasonableness of our acting on God's judgment of men. (6) A motive to diligence in keeping the heart.

S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 5th series, No. xxiii.

HERE is something in the character of Eliab which makes him unfit for the office of king. Eliab seems to have become a great man afterwards. We read of him as a prince of the tribe of Judah, and of his daughter or his granddaughter as the queen of Rehoboam. But, though the eldest son of the house and of the tribe, there was wanting in him the especial spirit of David; he showed, though in less degree, the fault of Saul, and the very next thing we find him doing is exhibiting the contrary character to Samuel's and David's, and saying and doing exactly what Saul might have done. It is an instance of envy, of harsh, uncharitable judgment. When David came down with a message from his father, Eliab, utterly misunderstanding the case, caring nothing to know the rights of it, heedless of justice or of feeling, forgets that the boy has been sent by his father, sent for his good and sent at a risk, and he shows penetration, as he thinks, in accusing David of coming down merely to see the battle. How prone we all are to ascribe our neighbour's act to self-seeking and self-conceit and self-indulgence, while for our own faults we find excuses, justifications, easy assertions. There are pleasures greater than triumphs, clearer insight than worldly penetration. Let us rejoice over each other's good and discern each other's goodness, because "charity envieth not, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil."

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 74.

CONSIDER the necessity we lie under, if we would be Christians indeed, of drawing our religious notions and views, not from what we see, but from what we do not see and only hear, or rather the great mistake under which men of the world lie of judging religious subjects merely by what the experience of life tells them. We must believe something; the difference between religious men and others is, that the latter trust this world, the former the world unseen. Both of them have faith, but the one have faith in the surface of things, the other in the word of God.

I. We see this truth in a doctrine much debated, much resisted, at this day—the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Here we find that experience is counter to the word of God, which says that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he is no member of Christ's kingdom. We have here a trial of faith—the faith which alone overcomes the world.

II. Another trial of faith is the success which attends

measures or institutions which are not in accordance with the revealed rule of duty. In every age and at all times, the Church seems to be failing and its enemies to be prevailing.

III. Another instance in which experience and faith are opposed to each other is to be found in the case of those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Incarnation, or the Atonement, or original sin.

IV. A fourth instance is the difficulty of believing the words of Scripture that the impenitent shall go into fire everlasting. We feel it a hard saying that even the most wicked should be destined to eternal punishment. But we must accept the truth, as an act of faith towards God and as a solemn warning to ourselves.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 63.

REFERENCES: xvi. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 71; A. F. Reid, *Dundee Pulpit*, 1872, p. 92; Bailey, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 53; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 427; S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 84. xvi. 11.—*Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 39; T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 150; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 345. xvi. 11, 12.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 5th series, p. 1.

Chap. xvi., ver. 13.—"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed David in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

DAVID was not only the topmost man of his century, but also the climax of the best life of the chosen people of God, the consummate flower of the religion of Moses in its best days. He was a man of striking mental and moral opulence; rich in gifts and richer in achievements; a poet and a politician; a chief of brigands and a champion of the armies of God; a vassal of the Philistines and the creator of the Hebrew fatherland; simple as a child in his hunger for love, in beautiful humility, and in frank self-avowal, but prudent, cautious, and self-controlled in the thick onset of danger; tender-hearted, even to folly, as a father, but wise, sagacious, and powerful as a ruler of men, as is proved by his knitting together the scattered tribes of Israel into an invincible unity. What then is the full tale of this man's upbuilding?

I. Remember: (1) Man is a spirit. (2) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Spirit builds spirit; soul makes soul. The Hebrew historian accounts for David—for all he was and all he did—by the simple and comprehensive statement, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

Whatever David is that is spiritual and Godlike is due to that benignant advent, and whatever he accomplishes that advances the well-being of Israel results from that invisible presence.

II. Why is it that David, of all the sons of Jesse and of all the children of Israel, is elected by the prophet for this special consecration to kingly place and power? The answer is that God sees in that lad the rightness of heart which is the only basis for the building up of a true character, the manifest "set" of the inward life in its faith and hope, its yearning and passion, towards God and goodness, which is before all things the qualification for a redeeming and renewing career amongst men. Evermore God's unseen educating ministry goes forward. He is always preparing the world's kings. True rulers are never absent. When the clock of time strikes, and their hour is come, they take their place and do their work, and we are debtors all.

III. Nothing more eradicably rooted itself in David's mind or found more pathetic expression in his songs than the immense educational influence of his family and shepherd life. That influence was the salt of his career. It brought him face to face with reality, and developed an inwardness of being that brought peace and power for evermore.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 163.

REFERENCES: xvi. 13.—Bishop Walsham How, *Plain Words to Children*, p. 68; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. ii., p. 39.

Chap. xvi., ver. 14.—"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."

SAUL, self-willed and capricious, had shown himself unfit for his position, so the Spirit of God was taken from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified or troubled him.

Notice: I. Men must either have the Spirit of God or an evil spirit. (1) God loves to dwell in the human heart. That is His chosen temple. The sky is vast, and its canopy is thick with worlds, but that is not the temple that God seeks. The earth is beautiful and sublime, but God does not choose that temple. Man rears lofty piles, but God's chosen temple is not there. His temple is in the lowly heart, in the bosom of the meanest of the sons of men who cries out for God. (2) But if man will not have God, he cannot shut the door of his heart against other visitors. Spirit cannot isolate itself from spirit, any more than matter can from matter. But the spirit can decide whether it will ally itself with the good or the evil. If God is not received,

evil spirits enter, being invited by the sympathies and affinities of the soul. Man is like a house situated between two winds. Every one must decide to which side he is going to open. Both doors cannot be shut. You can only get the dismal, fatal door shut by opening wide the door that looks to the sea of eternity and the sunshine of God. The wind blowing in through this open door keeps the door of ruin shut.

II. The stress of inward temptation and trouble is often peculiarly fitted and evidently intended to drive men to God.

Of temptations and troubles which have this adaptation in a marked degree may be mentioned first: (1) Melancholy. Saul's was a very conspicuous and overmastering melancholy. Melancholy is essentially the feeling of loneliness, the sense of isolation, of having a great burden of existence to bear. It is the soul's fear, and shrinking, and chill in the vast solitude of its house. It has driven many souls to God. (2) A feeling of the vanity of existence is another great temptation and trouble. This is the cause of much feebleness of purpose, and want of principle, and bitterness, and cynicism. There is no remedy for it but in faith in God and an eternal future. (3) The mystery of life weighs on others—what Wordsworth calls "the weight and mystery of all this unintelligible world." When the night of mystery comes down and closes round us, let us press close to Christ. (4) The gloom and desolation of doubt and unbelief constrain men to turn to God. (5) Fierce temptations to evil drive many souls to God.

J. Leckie, *Sermons Preached at Ibrox*, p. 244 (see also *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 25).

References: xvi. 14.—Phillips Brooks, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 297; F. W. Hook, *Parish Sermons*, p. 44; I. Williams, *Characters of the Old Testament*, p. 171; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *A Course of Sermons for the Christian Year*, p. 281. xvi. 14-23.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 13.

Chap. xvi., ver. 18.—"Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him."

In this passage we meet with David when he was still but a young man, and there are five distinct things mentioned about him which we may find it useful to consider.

I. Notice first his *person*, his pleasing and attractive presence or address. He had an admirable physique, had his head screwed on the right way, and was of immense strength and

agility. The prominent feature about him was his manliness. There was nothing little about him. As we read the story of his life we smell the breath of the new-mown hay, and hear the bleatings on the Bethlehem hills.

II. His *pastime.* David's favourite pastime was music. He consecrated that great gift of his to the highest ends, and found music to be most enjoyable when linked with sacred themes. We should learn from him, not only to cultivate our faculties, but to employ them in the service and for the glory of God.

III. His *patriotism.* David's courage and chivalry were not confined to camps and battlefields, but characterised his whole life. No mere ambitious self-seeker was David; he was as genuine a patriot as ever lived. A healthy and unselfish public spirit needs to be cultivated. The first and most obvious duty which a man owes to the commonwealth is to see that he is no burden to it. It is in vigilant industry and sound common-sense, employed about a man's daily calling, that he makes his first contribution to the nation's wealth and weal.

IV. His *prudence.* The text describes him as "prudent in matters"—*i.e.*, a young man of sound judgment and of sterling common-sense. Even as a mere lad he showed singular judgment. Many a youth would have fairly lost his head when taken from the sheep-folds to the palace. David did not. Three times over it is declared of him that "he behaved himself wisely."

V. His *piety.* "And the Lord was with him." This was his noblest recommendation; he carried God with him into all the minutest details of life. He was "a man after God's own heart." Learn from his life to decide what the principles of your life are to be, and stand by them at any cost.

J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 19.

David displays in his personal character that very temper of mind in which his nation, or rather human nature itself, is especially deficient. Pride and unbelief disgrace the history of the chosen people, the deliberate love of this world which was the sin of Balaam, and the presumptuous wilfulness which was exhibited in Saul. But David is conspicuous for an affectionate, a thankful, a loyal, heart towards his God and Defender, a zeal which was as fervent and as docile as Saul's was sullen, and as keen-sighted and pure as Balaam's was selfish and double-minded.

I. Consider what was, as far as we can understand, David's

especial grace, as faith was Abraham's distinguishing virtue, meekness the excellence of Moses, self-mastery the gift especially conspicuous in Joseph. From the account of David's office in Psalm lxxviii. 71-73, it is obvious that his very first duty was that of fidelity to Almighty God in the trust committed to him. Saul had neglected his Master's honour, but David, in this an eminent type of Christ, "came to do God's will." As a viceroy in Israel, and as being tried and found faithful, he is especially called "a man after God's own heart." David's peculiar excellence is that of fidelity to the trust committed to him.

II. Surely the blessings of the patriarchs descended in a united flood upon "the lion of the tribe of Judah," the type of the true Redeemer who was to come. He inherits the prompt faith and magnanimity of Abraham; he is simple as Isaac; he is humble as Jacob; he has the youthful wisdom and self-possession, the tenderness, the affectionateness, and the firmness of Joseph. And as his own especial gift, he has an overflowing thankfulness, a heroic bearing in all circumstances, such as the multitude of men see to be great, but cannot understand.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 44.

REFERENCES: xvi. 23.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 20, T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 166 S. Cox, *The Bird's Nest*, p. 99.

Chap. xvii.

NOTICE: I. David was on God's side. This was a religious war. Goliath fought for Dagon and cursed David by his gods. David fought for Jehovah. Let every child know for certain that he is, like David, a warrior and champion.

II. David fought in God's strength. God's Spirit gave him his holy courage, suggested his weapons, and guided the stone from the sling to Goliath's temples. Was not David the man after God's own heart because he so frankly owned God in everything? David and Goliath represent two systems and two kingdoms. The war between the Israelites and Philistines is still raging. On which side are you?

III. David the conqueror. If on God's side, you shall win in the end, because God shall win, and all His shall win with Him. The world's creed often is that might is right; ours is that right is might, for God is with the right, and makes it at length almighty as Himself.

J. WELLS, *Bible Children*, p. 145.

DAVID'S fight with Goliath was: (1) a good fight, and (2) a fight of faith. It was a good fight because David was fighting for a good cause: for the cause and people of God. Goliath was a bad man, and he was the soldier of a bad cause. He had mocked God's people and God. And David went down to fight with him, because he both heard and saw that he was an enemy of God. And it was a fight of faith, because in going down to the fight David did not trust in sword, or spear, or shield, nor in his youth, or his strength, or any seen thing, but in God, whom he could not see. In the strength of God's presence he went to meet Goliath. Our fight now is with badness itself. That is the great giant Christ sends us to fight with; that is the one chief enemy He Himself fights against.

A. MACLEOD, *Talking to the Children*, p. 191.

REFERENCES: xvii. 16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 329. xvii. 29.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 72; Bishop Claughton, *Church Sermons by Eminent Clergymen*, vol. i., p. 249. xvii. 36, 37.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1253, and vol. xxx., No. 1810. xvii.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 211; W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 26; *Sunday Magazine*, 1886, p. 258.

Chap. xvii., ver. 37.—"David said, moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

SAUL by his sins forfeited the kingdom to a neighbour of his, who was better than he in the very particulars wherein Saul had so sadly failed. We find in David: (1) A single-hearted trust in the God of Israel; a generous forgetfulness of himself. (2) A combination of courage and modesty in God's service; a zeal to do, if possible, some great thing for Him, without any disposition to value himself on it when it was done.

I. It is well to remember that David had been chosen out by special message from God and anointed to be king, and knew himself to be so. He knew himself to be marked out from the beginning for the highest place, yet never on any occasion did he show the least disposition to press into it.

II. In David's argument, as given in the text, we find a plain, straightforward, manly way of taking things. He had recourse, not to the promise of the kingdom, but to God's past preservation of him, and to his certainty that he was undertaking God's own cause.

III. David, by his simplicity and singleness of heart, became a type of our Lord and Redeemer. And being so, he was a type

and pattern of His Church and of every individual member of the same. From his conduct on this occasion we may learn these lessons: (1) No man's heart need fail him because of any spiritual danger which the world calls irresistible. (2) We should leave nothing undone that might glorify God. (3) We should not be anxious to invent ways of our own, but rather use the ways that God has appointed, and when these fail leave Him to do the rest. (4) As God's mercies continue increasing, so should our remembrance of them increase.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. iv., p. 133 (see also J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity,* Part I., p. 150).

CONSIDER: I. How David reasoned from past mercies, and grounded upon them the expectation of future aid from above. He had been delivered from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, and this deliverance he recalled to mind in a moment of new danger, as feeling it to be prophetic of his victory over the giant, and thus had he commenced, even in his young days, that habit of appealing to his own experience of which we find frequent traces in his writings, and which cannot be too earnestly commended to all who wish to enjoy godly peace.

II. David's readiness to make use of means, notwithstanding his full confidence in the succour and protection of God. He tried the armour which Saul proposed, though he felt assured that the Lord would deliver him. If ever man might have ventured to neglect means, since the result was ordained, David might have been warranted in refusing the armour without trying it on. But this is just what David did not do; he proceeded on the principle that no expectation of a miracle should make us slack in the employment of means, but that so long as means are within reach we are bound to employ them, though it may not be through their use that God will finally work.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit,* No. 2426.

Chap. xvii., ver. 45.—"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts," etc.

I. IN the battle of life good men have to fight a powerful foe. (1) In the battle of life we have to contend with numerous adversaries. (2) In the battle of life we are often hindered by those who ought to help us. (3) In the battle of life we

are animated by various feelings. (4) In the battle of life past victories strengthen us for future conflicts.

II. In the battle of life good men need Divine assistance. David's dependence on God was right for four reasons. (1) It ensured the right help for the combat. (2) It awakened a right spirit for the combat. (3) It led to a right selection of weapons for the combat. (4) It secured a right issue in the combat.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 78.

REFERENCES: xvii. 45.—J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, Nos. 64 and 65. xvii. 40-54.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons to Children*, 5th series, p. 13. xvii. 45.—J. W. Atkinson, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 935; C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 242. xvii. 45, 46.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 35. xvii. 47.—A. G. Brown, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1054; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 57; T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 189. xvii. 48.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. i., p. 192.

Chap. xvii., ver. 50.—"So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone."

THE history of David's combat with Goliath sets before us our own calling and our conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Consider: I. David was the son of a Bethlehemite, one among the families of Israel with nothing apparently to recommend him to God, the youngest of his brethren, and despised by them. He seemed born to live and die among his sheep. Yet God took him from the sheepfolds to make him His servant and friend. This is fulfilled in the case of all Christians. They are by nature poor and mean and nothing worth, but God chooses them and brings them unto himself.

II. David was a shepherd when God chose him, for He chooses not the great men of the world. The most solitary, the most unlearned, God visits, God blesses, God brings to glory, if he be but rich in faith. All Christians are kings in God's sight, they are kings in His unseen kingdom, in His spiritual world, in the communion of saints.

III. Next, observe, God chose David by the prophet Samuel. He did not think it enough to call him silently, but He called him by a voice. And so in like manner God sends His ministers to those whom He hath from eternity chosen. Samuel chose only one; but now God gives His ministers leave to apply Christ's saving death to all whom they can find.

IV. When Samuel had anointed David, the Spirit of God came upon him from that day forward. God's Spirit vouchsafes

to dwell within the Christian, and to make his heart and body His temple.

V. Though David received the gift of God's Holy Spirit, yet nothing came of it all at once. So it is with Baptism. Nothing shows, for some time, that the Spirit of God has come into the child baptised; but the Lord who seeth the heart, sees in the child the presence of the Spirit.

VI. Lastly, let us enquire who is our Goliath. The answer is plain: the devil is our Goliath; we have to fight Satan, and the warfare against him lasts all through life. We come against him in Christ's all powerful, all conquering name.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. v., p. 198 (see also J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 48.

REFERENCES: xvii. 50.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 430; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons*, 1st series, p. 306.

Chap. xvii., ver. 58.—"Whose son art thou, young man?"

THIS question, short and simple as it is, is suggestive of some practical thoughts on the subjection of personal responsibility and faithfulness to the traditions of one's pedigree, or it may be, in the way of warning against lineal weaknesses and sins.

I. My first word is to those of you who have sprung from a lowly parentage. If there is anything more utterly contemptible than for one who has risen in the world to be ashamed of his humble origin, it is the conduct of him who ridicules his low-born brother. The hands of Jesse, the Bethlehemite farmer, were somewhat horny, and his wife a plain, unpretending body, but their son was proud to take them on a visit to Mizpeh of Moab, and introduce them to the king.

II. My next word is to those who have been born in the line of a Christian parentage. The purest blood this world has ever known is that of a Christian ancestry. It is not enough for those who come of a saintly stock to shun the sins of the prodigal, they ought to be conspicuous for their Christian character.

III. I am not afraid to put the question even to those who have had no such advantage. Many a clean bird has come out of a foul nest. Divine grace is stronger even than blood. History can supply many an instance to the praise of Him who oft-times finds the brightest diamonds in the darkest mines, and the richest pearls in the deepest seas.

IV. A purely spiritual meaning may be given to the text. There are but two paternities, and one or other of these we all

must own. Would that we could all reply to the question "Whose son art thou?"—"Behold, now are we the sons of God."

J. THAIN DAVIDSON, *The City Youth*, p. 127.

REFERENCES: xvii. 58.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, p. 96. xviii. 1.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xix., p. 200. xviii. 1, 2.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 51. xviii. 1-30.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 39. xviii. 3.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 436; Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes*, p. 60. xviii.—W. Hanna, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 530.

Chap. xviii., vers. 7, 8.—"And the women answered as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," etc.

THIS incident teaches three things respecting good and bad men.

I. The wicked are often jealous of a good man's popularity. Saul's behaviour to David reveals the progress of jealousy in four stages. (1) There is anger. (2) There is envy. (3) There is madness. (4) There is murder. Jealousy is a foolish, a wicked and a dangerous passion.

II. The wicked are often terrified by a good man's security. Saul's fear led to the adoption of the most desperate means to ruin David. (1) Saul resolves to dismiss David. (2) Saul endeavours to provoke David. (3) Saul determines to kill David.

III. The wicked are often defeated by a good man's valour. In David's conduct in his encounter with the Philistines, there are three things to be noted. (1) David fulfils the king's stipulation. (2) David thwarts the king's purpose. (3) David wins the king's daughter. God can make the impediments that are thrown in the way of His children aids to their progress.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 79.

REFERENCES: xviii. 9.—Parker, vol, vi., p. 351. xviii. 12-30.—*Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 1. xviii. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 250; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 111. xviii. 33.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 331. xix. 2.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 1st series, p. 416. xix.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 52

Chap. xix., vers. 11. 12.—"Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped," etc.

IN this passage there is a minute account of an appalling danger to which David was exposed.

I. God's servants are frequently exposed to alarming dangers (1) This danger came at an unexpected time. (2) This danger proceeded from a powerful enemy. (3) This danger assumed a most alarming aspect.

II. God's servants are frequently warned of approaching danger. (1) David's warning came from different sources. (2) David's warning demanded immediate attention. (3) David's warning led to decisive action.

III. God's servants are frequently delivered from impending dangers. The context shows that God delivers His servants in four ways: (1) By friendly mediation. (2) By personal watchfulness. (3) By conjugal fidelity. (4) By Divine interposition.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 81.

REFERENCES: xix. 11, 12 and xix. 18.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, pp. 68, 86. xix. 18-20.—G. B. Ryley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii. p. 285; Payne-Smith, *Bampton Lectures*, 1869, p. 128.

Chap. xix., ver. 20.—"**And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.**"

PROPHECY, according to the notions popularly entertained of it, might be defined to be a mere prediction of future events, and the prophet one who utters such prediction. This definition, however, does not embrace the essentials of the thing defined. The prophet of former days was, in all substantial points, identical with the preacher of these. The commission of both prophet and preacher is to set forth the Divine oracles; to speak to their fellow-sinners the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. Prediction and instruction are only different portions of the Divine word. Our text presents to us two great subjects for consideration. (1) A spiritual influence exerted upon certain persons. (2) The instrumentality employed in making this impression.

I. Both the messengers of Saul and Saul himself were constrained by a strange and irresistible influence to prophesy before Samuel. Saul stripping off his royal apparel and lying down in the dust before Samuel presents to us a picture of the sinner's self-abasement, when the convicting and converting influences of the Holy Spirit first pour in upon his heart. It was marvellous that a hard and bad man should thus be absorbed into the vortex of a spiritual influence; that he should be turned aside from his purpose by the coming in upon him of a holy ecstasy,

which rapt him into compliance with the suggestions of the Spirit.

II. It was the sight of the Church's ministers uttering under the Spirit's influences the mysteries of the Divine word, which made so great an impression on Saul and his messengers. It is not, however, by any mere power of moral persuasion that the alienated heart of man can be effectually turned to God. The Spirit must second the prophet's testimony, putting life and energy into the preached word and causing it to penetrate into the springs of the character.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 97.

REFERENCE: xix. 22.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 72.

Chap. xix., ver. 24.—"Is Saul also among the prophets?"

WE are not told any remarkable points in the character or early discipline of Saul; there were probably none to tell. As we have often had occasion to notice in the earlier Scripture narratives, a man not distinguished from his fellows by any peculiar gifts, merely a specimen of the ordinary human material, may nevertheless be brought most livingly before us; we may be compelled to feel that he is an individual man, one of ourselves, and as such to care for him.

I. There are moments in the mind of the dullest, most prosaic man, when unknown springs seem to be opened in him, when either some new and powerful affection, or quite as often the sense of a vocation, fills him with thoughts and causes him to utter words which are quite alien from his ordinary habits, and which have yet in them a pledge and savour of originality. It is a fact of this kind which the record discloses to us. "God gave him another heart—the Spirit of God came upon him"—these are the words which tell us what that prophetic impulse denoted. However unwonted might be the thoughts which stirred in him and the words which he poured forth, they could not have come from some irregular tumultuous excitement, they must have proceeded from the very spirit of calmness and order. Saul was among the prophets precisely because he confessed the presence of such a spirit of calmness and order.

II. Saul is no monster who has won power by false means and then plunges at once into a reckless abuse of it—no apostate who casts off the belief in God, and sets up some Ammonite or Phœnician idol. He merely forgets the Lord and the teacher who had imparted to him that new life and inspiration, he

merely fails to remember that he is under a law and that he has a vocation. The calm spirit of trust and hope has been resisted and grieved, and there comes upon him an evil spirit from the Lord, an accusing conscience warning him of what he had been, throwing its dark shadow upon the present, making the future look dim and gloomy.

III. There are glimpses of light in the later life of Saul, which we refer at once to a Divine source, which it would be sinful to refer to any other. The love and loyalty of David, in sparing his life, were not unrewarded. They struck out sparks of love in him, they made it evident that there was something deeper and healthier beneath all his strangest distortions of mind. And that sacred inspiration, of which our text speaks, which recalled the almost forgotten question: "Is Saul among the prophets?" though it came mixed with a wild kind of insanity, yet proclaimed that God's Spirit, which bloweth where it listeth, had not left this building to be a mere possession for the birds of night.

F. D. MAURICE, *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, p. 17.

REFERENCES: xix. 24.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 1st series, p. 90. xx. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1870; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 337. xx.-xxii.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 65.

Chap. xx., ver. 6.—"If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me, that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family."

THE word in this verse rendered "sacrifice," is in the margin of our English Bibles rendered with somewhat greater felicity "feast." The family of Jesse continued to keep up their residence in Bethlehem after David had been chosen and anointed as the successor of Saul upon the throne, and carefully observed the household festivals through the year as in earlier days they had been accustomed.

I. At the outset let us notice some of the advantages found in the observance of this yearly thanksgiving festival. (1) First and chief of these is the consideration that for all God's love and care for us, there is due at least full acknowledgment of the hand which has given them to us. (2) There is manifest advantage in these annual festivals growing out of the cultivation of our domestic affections and the perpetuation of our home tastes and feelings. (3) Again there is manifest

advantage in these thanksgiving festivals found in the perpetuation of ancestral memories to which they are calculated most strongly to minister. (4) The yearly festival gives an opportunity for kindling and quickening a true patriotism in the hearts of the people.

II. Notice, secondly, where David went to keep the festival. (1) To his own city, the story says, and that city was Bethlehem; a poor little town indeed, but it was his, and that was enough. (2) David went to his own home in Bethlehem. Escaping for a day from the frightful dangers of Saul's palace, he would rehearse at home the many troublous experiences he had had. (3) David would go to the various houses of his brethren.

No appliances are within our reach so easy of employment and so sure in result as thanksgiving associations carefully observed. Once a year, at least, the fetters of business and care drop off, and the worn man becomes a sort of hero in a family triumph and is refreshed by becoming a child again.

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 193.

REFERENCES: xx. 6.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 523. xx. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1188. xx. 16, 17.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 102. xx. 25.—J. Hiles Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 153; E. Mellor, *The Hem of Christ's Garment*, p. 110; Parker, vol. vii., pp. 73, 74. xx. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1454. xx. 34.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 8 (see also *The Ark of God*, p. 264). xx. 39.—*Ibid.*, p. 74

Chap. xx., ver. 42.—"And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever," etc.

THIS was the last meeting and the final leaving of two young men whose friendship has been a proverb for nearly thirty centuries.

I. There are partings in every life; the ties of yesterday are loosened to-day, and will be broken to-morrow. We are closely bound to each other by the strong bonds of circumstances one moment, and the next we are severed and each goes on his way to strive or to suffer, and to conquer or to fall, alone. The hour of parting came to David and Jonathan, and nought remained but this, "Jonathan said to David, Go in peace."

II. There was one thought which took away some of the bitterness of that moment and allowed them to go each on his way with a firm step and a strong heart, for theirs had been no

light and trifling friendship, which had sprung up in a day and might be dissolved in an hour, but a serious, manly, steadfast love, rooted in a common faith and held together by a common object animating their lives; and therefore the one could say to the other, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord." One might go back to the haunted house, where Saul would curse and rave, and the other might wander abroad in the wilderness; but come what might, they were both prepared for good or evil fortune. Both had sworn to put their trust in the living God.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 263.

REFERENCES: xxi. 1.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 118. xxi. 6.—J. E. Vaux, *Sermon Notes*, 2nd series, p. 82. xxi. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 74. xxi. 8.—*Ibid.*, p. 75.

Chap. xxi., vers. 8, 9.—"And David said unto Abimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword?" etc.

THE token of the victories of youth. There is nothing like that—no such talisman, no such weapon as that to be borne or wielded—no marvel that David rejoices to hear it is within reach.

The sword was to David: (1) The token of a good deed which he had done in singleness of heart. (2) The token of God's certain help in answer to faith. (3) The memory of a great danger past.

I. The thought of a good deed done in singleness of spirit lies at the heart as the warmest of God's comforts. Forty days the Philistine drew near, morning and evening, and presented himself. What lay before Israel, if the boy champion had not arrived, was to be the servant of the enemy; yet no one stirred. But David's spirit had not been overpowered. His instinct was not to watch till the fascination of fear had overcome him as it did the other warriors. It was to strike; strike with the simple weapon he was used to, and lo, the terror was gone. Our solitary souls as well as the great world are such a battlefield. The struggle is daily renewed. Two principles within—one godless and defying, one whose eyes are lit with the eternal light. Sin will overcome faith or faith will overcome sin; and each memory of a victory of faith is a strength in itself.

II. And then again, to look back on the signs of God's ready help, old answers to prayer when we were in trouble, the expected strength which did not disappoint us but was with us in some trial; these things bring home to us the sense of God's

presence and of God's help, until we are most sure of this, that all things work together for good to them that love Him.

III. But above all sources of strength, the memory of a great danger past is the most fruitful. A terror taken possession of, the assurance that it will terrify us no more; this is what God gives to good men in the evening of life.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 171.

REFERENCES: xxi. 8, 9.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 15. xxi. 9.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 19 (see also *The Ark of God*, p. 241); Johnstone, *Sunday Magazine*, 1873, p. 350. xxi. 10.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 118.

Chap. xxii., ver. 1.—"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him."

NOTICE: I. David's escape to the cave of Adullam. Sudden preferment is often followed by unexpected reverses. (1) It was a place of safety. (2) It was a place of comparative seclusion. (3) It was a place of earnest supplication. In that cave David sought forgiveness, protection, deliverance. There is a cave of Adullam in every life. Doubt, persecution, sickness, bereavement, any of these may be our cave.

II. David's associates in the cave of Adullam. (1) It was an affectionate association. (2) It was a mixed association. (3) It was a faithful association.

III. David's thoughtfulness in the cave of Adullam. He proved his ardent attachment to his parents. (1) By his dangerous journey to promote their comfort. "David went thence to Moab." (2) By his earnest intercession to obtain protection for his parents. "Let my father and mother, I pray thee, come forth to be with you." (3) By his special endeavour to secure respect for his parents, "He brought them before the king."

IV. David's departure from the cave of Adullam. (1) Good men receive timely direction from God. "Abide not in the hold." (2) Good men receive minute direction from God. "Get thee into the land of Judah." (3) Good men promptly obey the direction of God. "Then David departed." We dare not resist the leadings of Divine Providence. There is a time coming when we must all depart. We must depart from our work, and wealth, and friends, and home, and life.

PARKER, *The City Temple*, vol. i., p. 341.

REFERENCES: xxii. 1, 2.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of*

Israel, p. 131. xxii. 1-5.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 211. xxii. 5-xxiii. 28.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 79. xxii. 22.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 393. xxii.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 28. xxiii. 14.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 149. xxiii. 16.—J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*, p. 247. xxiii. 19.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 76. xxiii. 19, 20.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 112. xxiii. 28.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 439. xxiii.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 34. xxiv.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 231; W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 95.

Chap. xxiv., vers. 1, 2 (with Song of Sol., i. 14).—"And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi," etc.

ENGEDI means the fountain of the wild goat or rather, as we should say, of the ibex, the Syrian chamois, or the antelope. Among these wild but beautiful solitudes David, with his young men, established himself. Engedi itself was on a perpendicular cliff, hanging fifteen hundred feet above the Dead Sea. The palms have all gone, the vineyards all gone; the trenna, the beautiful wild flower supposed to be that called the camphire, abounds still. The crags and cliffs are thronged with doves, and upon a shelf of the mountain there is a little lakelet or fountain, breaking forth into a stream and tumbling on, no great torrent, but a thread of silver, for four hundred feet below.

I. Here, to David's retreat by the fountain of the wild goat, came Saul, "the deceitful and unjust man." But the cumbrous and heavy Saul could do nothing against the lithe stripling, David. There is even a sportive humour in the very acts by which David shows his superiority to his foe. Altogether, the sublime, the pathetic, the humorous and the graphic mingled together in the various adventures of David, the outlaw of Engedi.

II. With this spot too, no doubt, we are to associate the inditing of many of the imprecatory Psalms; for here, hunted as a bird through the wilderness, he said "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul."

III. During his stay at Engedi, David was not a wild bandit; among the hills the law of his God was in his heart; not wreaking on society his revenge, but flying to the spot where, if he could be most securely screened from invasion, he would also be farthest removed from the possibility of inflicting injury; and there he waited, nursing his great soul amidst the solitudes of

the eternal hills. Among the rocks of Engedi, David "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

E. PAXTON HOOD, *The Preacher's Lantern*, vol. iii., p. 605.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 4.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 149; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 442. xxiv. 11.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 20. xxiv. 16.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 41. xxv. 1.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 110; J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 78. xxv. 1-36.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 272. xxv. 3.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 51. xxv. 10.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2654. xxv. 10, 11.—F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 245. xxv. 8.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 168. xxv. 18.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 76. xxv. 29.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Children's Bread*, p. 113; F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 168. xxv. 32.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 445. xxvi. 6.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 187. xxvi. 25.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 44. xxvi.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 95. xxvii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 439; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 291; F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 199. xxvii.-xxxi.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 123. xxviii. 3.—C. J. Vaughan, *Sunday Magazine*, 1872, p. 777. xxviii. 3-19.—G. Mason, *A Pastor's Legacy*, p. 429. xxviii. 6.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 139. xxviii. 7.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 47. xxviii. 7-25.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 424, and vol. iv., p. 111. xxviii. 11.—B. J. Snell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 140; J. M. McCulloch, *Sermons on Unusual Subjects*, p. 13. xxviii.—W. Hanna, *Sunday Magazine*, 1865, p. 609.

Chap. xxviii., ver. 15.—"And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me," etc.

WE have before us here a picture of a God-deserted man; one who has in former times had plenteous advantage and revelation, but who has forsaken God until God has forsaken him in turn, and who is now joined to his idols, seared against the penitent desire; one who presents that most appalling of all wrecks of ruin—a human soul consciously severed from the sympathy, and bereft of the favour, of the Divine.

I. There is illustrated here the accelerating progress of evil. From the monarch on the eve of the battle of Jabesh-Gilead, to the monarch on the eve of the battle of Gilboa, what a fearful fall! Saul had suffered, because Saul had sinned. In his elevation he had forgotten God. Pride had stolen away his heart; he had been guilty of repeated and flagrant disobedience, and it is an easy descent to perdition when the bias of the nature is seconded by the strenuous endeavours of the will.

II. To every sinner there will come his moment of need. The worldling may prolong his revelry and accumulate his gain, but the hour will come when he will discover that the world is a cheat and that riches cannot always profit. Your hour of need may be nearer than you think. God's mercy may still delay it, but it will come—the hour of trial, when sorrow breaks upon sorrow, like billows upon a desolate strand. Flee to the ever-willing Saviour now and you shall have no need to work some foul enchantment in order to wring direction from the sheeted dead.

III. This subject illustrates the terrible power of conscience. Saul's greatest enemy was within—the wounded spirit, a more dreaded foe than all the Philistine armies; the dogs of remorse more furious than the dogs of war. And so it always is with the sinner. Christ alone can still the tempest with a word, whether it rage upon a Lake of Galilee or surge and swell on a poor sinner's soul.

W. MORLEY PUNSHON, *Sermons*, p. 35.

I. WE, in this world, are in a state of probation. (1) We are placed amongst a multitude of outward things which perpetually force us to choose whether we will act in this way or in that; and every one of these choices must agree with the holy and perfect will of God, or else be opposed to it. (2) The especial trial of us Christians consists in our being placed amongst these temptations under the personal influence of God the Holy Ghost, so that in every such distinct act of choice there is either a direct yielding, or a direct opposition to His secret suggestions.

II. The necessary consequences of every act of resistance to the Holy Spirit must, by a twofold process, carry us on towards final impenitence. For (1) by our moral constitution, the breaking through any restraint from evil, or the resisting any suggestion of good, carries us by an inevitable reaction somewhat farther than we were before in the opposite direction. (2) By resisting the Holy Spirit we cause Him to withdraw from us those influences for good in which is alone for us the spring and possibility of amendment. As a necessary consequence of such a withdrawal the progress of the forsaken soul towards final hardness is inevitable.

III. These, then, are the lessons from this fearful subject. (1) That we strive diligently to maintain such a temper of watchful observance for the motions of the Blessed Spirit as that we may never unawares resist or neglect any of His lightest intimations.

(2) Let us learn not to trifle with any sin. (3) If through our exceeding feebleness we have fallen, let us learn to look straight to the cross of Christ and strive diligently in His strength to arise again.

S. WILBERFORCE, *University Sermons*, p. 222.

REFERENCES: xxviii. 15.—M. Nicholson, *Communion with Heaven*, p. 206; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 1. xxix. 6. with xxx. 1, 2.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 199; Parker, vol. vii., p. 52. xxix. 8.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 256. xxx. 6.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 448; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. ii., p. 195. xxx. 6-8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1606. xxx. 13.—*Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 72. xxx. 20.—*Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes*, Genesis to Proverbs, p. 64. xxx. 24.—*Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 43. xxxi. 4.—R. C. Trench, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 321.

II. SAMUEL.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 123. i. 1-28.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 345. i. 9.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. i., p. 119. i. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 39. i. 12.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 102. i. 17.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 220. i. 17, 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1694; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 17.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow."

THE Bow is the title given to David's poem, and it should rather read "Also he bade them teach the children of Israel the song of the bow." David turned the death of Saul in his song into the means of bringing all the energies, the glowing patriotism, of the land upon national defence. He roused and concentrated the military spirit, and taught them the use, while he taught them the song, of the bow.

Notice: I. The song of the bow is a song of trial and discipline. He bade them teach, and teach the children, the young. The song of the bow is a song of war. In the old Hebrew fashion this is full of the grief of life. It is possible, not merely to set the sad things of life to music, but the discipline and endeavour of life itself, so that it becomes a grand overcoming,

II. The song of the bow is not only the song of battle, discipline and trial, but a song of victory and triumph. Let us spell over the illustrious story of our Saviour's death, of His glorious resurrection and ascension, and let us take this as our song of the bow.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 365.

REFERENCE: i. 18-27.—A. P. Stanley, *Good Words*, 1863, p. 121.

Chap. i., vers. 19-27.—"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!"

I. ONE of the first lessons impressed upon us by this lament relates to David's noble-minded forgetfulness of all personal injury.

II. The lament shows how David was able to take the highest and brightest view of human character.

III. The lament impresses us with the beauty of a zealous and tender care for the reputation of the Lord's anointed.

IV. The lament shows how bitter is the distress which follows the irreparable losses of life.

The application of the whole: (1) Let us so live that death will be but a momentary separation. (2) In commending the wonderful love of Jonathan let us remember that there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 359.

REFERENCES: i. 20.—J. Edmunds, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 123. i. 21.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, 1887, p. 414.

Chap. i., ver. 25.—"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places."

THIS poem owes much of its admirableness to the fact that it combines the passionate love of country and the true love of a friend. If ever a man was born for friendship it was David the king. Once and once only during his long eventful life did he find a man he could love with the multitudinous energy of his heart; and this man was the king's son, the darling of the nation, the "beauty of the forest" they called him, as like a gazelle he bounded from crag to crag in the mountains or dashed through the thickest of the wood. The homage paid by the poet to the beauty and the strength and the glorious prowess of his friend must be supplemented by the homage we know that he paid to the noble generosity of his friend. Such was David's *in memoriam* to the one personal friend of his life. He delighted to think of his friend's brilliancy, his strength, his courage; he was the champion of Israel, the protector of his countrymen against the natural enemy, and now the enemy was triumphant and the young hero was slain. The poem suggests some thoughts on friendship.

I. If any one of our friends were to die to-morrow, could we find anything in him which has ennobled our life, anything worthy of the stately name of friendship? If not, if the bond was unholy or unprofitable, what shame, what grief will be ours as we think of our departed friend.

II. Let us remember that the grave is not the only teacher though it is one of the most bitter. We are able now, at this moment, while we can still grasp our friends' hands, and see them and walk with them, to see what true friendship is. Like

the great Emperor Marcus Aurelius, we can tranquilly set down that we owe that to this friend, and something else to a second and a third; a kindly encouragement, a noble idea implanted, an enthusiasm, a painful duty carried out.

III. And then we can hope to be not only receptive, but to have been able to give back something which our friends have used well. Such a satisfaction as this is worth living for and worth praying for.

H. M. BUTLER, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 99.

REFERENCE: i. 25-27.—A. P. Stanley, *Good Words*, 1873, p. 641.

Chap. i., ver. 26.—"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

Two great qualities were combined in Jonathan, courage and faith. With such qualities, who could be more fit to succeed to the sceptre of Israel? And yet Jonathan waived all claim on behalf of the man whom he loved; he recognised in David qualities for rule greater than his own, and without a particle of envy he stood aside to make way for him. He had the true humility of soul which is content to take the lower place, and which is commended by our Lord in the Gospel.

I. The real friend will be like Jonathan, and true friendship is best described by the same words in which true charity is described. True friendship envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not easily provoked, rejoiceth in the truth, and never faileth. In the world with its sorrows and its sufferings, its trials and temptations, there is nothing more truly precious than a real friend, such a friend as Jonathan was to David and David to Jonathan.

II. There is one Friend who is ever near at hand if only we will seek Him. In the Lord Jesus Christ are joined all the qualities of true friendship. He is a firm Friend, a constant Friend, a Friend that giveth good counsel, a Friend who has laid down His life on our behalf.

R. D. B. RAWNSLEY, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 139.

REFERENCES: i. 26.—C. Kingsley, *Four Sermons Preached at Cambridge*, 1865, p. 69; T. Guthrie, *The Way to Life*, p. 156; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 32; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 416; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 107; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 78. i. 27.—G. R. Gleig, *Good Words*, 1871, p. 847. i. 28.—*Congregationalist*, vol vii., p. 659. i.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 22; Parker, vol. vii., p. 79. ii. 4.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 451; F. W. Krummacher,

David the King of Israel, p. 236. ii. 8.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 229. ii. 26.—*Ibid.*; C. Kingsley, *The Water of Life, and Other Sermons*, p. 158; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 367. ii. 29.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 230. ii.—*Ibid.*, p. 83. iii. 10.—*Ibid.*, p. 231. iii. 17.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 101. iii. 17, 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1375.

Chap. iii., ver. 33.—"And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?"

I. The first mark of folly about Abner's death is his strange simplicity and wonderful credulity. He had been used to court life; he had been continually by the king's side, and therefore he must have learned that the art of political speaking is to conceal your thoughts, and that courtiers' tongues shroud by language the intentions of the heart. Strange that a man like Abner, who had passed through such a school as two courts, should have believed so readily the message which Joab sent him. No man was ever more off his guard, or walked more deliberately into a trap. In the same way, it is marvellous how unsuspicious men are of sin's designs. Sin seems to sing like an enchantress, like the sirens who sang to Ulysses; and the shrewdest and the cleverest men are irresistibly, almost imperceptibly drawn toward it, and they who would see through a deception of another sort in a moment, seem, like Abner, utterly blinded in this respect.

II. Note the next thing in Abner's folly—his unused advantages. Abner was a prisoner to nobody but himself. No cord bound his arms; no iron fetters were upon his feet. Yet with hands unused and feet unemployed, he stands still like a fool to be killed.

We have had many advantages. We have the Bible, the message of the Gospel, the noble examples of parents and friends. If we die without hope, it may well be said as a requiem over us, "Died Abner as a fool dieth?"

III. Abner's very position made his folly the greater. Hebron was one of the cities of refuge. Joab spoke with him outside the gate, so Abner was within one step of safety when he was slain. Jesus Christ, the true city of Hebron—the real city of refuge—is close by us now, and if we die unsaved, like Abner, we shall die with the shadow of security lying athwart our prostrate forms.

A. G. Brown, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 922.

References: iii. 38.—J. Hiles Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 281; H. Grey, *A Parting Memorial*, p. 112. iii. 39.—

Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 334; Parker, vol. vii., p. 231. iii. —*Ibid.*, p. 86. iv. 1.—*Ibid.*, p. 232. iv. 4.—J. Ker, *Sunday Magazine*, 1875, p. 279. iv. 9-12.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 98. iv.—*Ibid.*, p. 106 v. 1-7.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 253. v. 3.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 125. v. 10.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 232. v. 11.-vi. 23.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 154.

Chap. v., ver. 12.—"And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake."

I. Two memorable passages in the history of David,—the establishment of his capital, and the removal of the ark to the hill above it,—illustrate the principles upon which his kingdom stood, and show wherein it differed from the great Asiatic empires which were then contemporary with it. The civic life, the life of cities, was with other nations the beginning, with the Jews it was the result of a long process. In the first, you have a despotism, which becomes more expansive and more oppressive from day to day; in the other case, you have a struggle, sometimes a weary struggle, but it is the struggle of spirits, it is a struggle for life. The ark spoke to the Israelites of a permanent Being, of a righteous Being, always above His creatures, always desiring fellowship with them, a fellowship which they could only realise when they were seeking to be like Him. Their king ruled so long as his throne was based upon righteousness; the moment he sought for any other foundation, he would become weak and contemptible. All David's discipline had been designed to settle him in this truth. He was the man after God's own heart, because he so graciously received that discipline and imbibed that truth. The signal sin of his life confirmed it still more mightily for himself and for all ages to come.

II. The discipline which followed upon David's sin was not for him more than for his people, nor for his people more than for all ages to come. That which enabled David, crushed and broken, to be more than ever the man after God's own heart, was also that which fitted him to be a ruler,—by understanding the only condition on which it is possible for a man to exercise real dominion over others, viz. when he gives up himself, that they may know God and not him to be their sovereign. One of the best proofs that his schooling was effectual is this, that all his family griefs, his experience of his own evil, the desertion of his subjects, did not lead him to fancy that he should be

following a course acceptable to God if he retired to the deserts instead of doing the work which was appointed for him. He found out the necessity of seeking God continually, because he learnt how weak he was, and how little he could be a king over men when the image of the Divine kingdom was not present to him.

III. We might have expected to see David's sun setting in splendour, to be told of some great acts, or hear some noble words which would assure us that he died a saint. The Bible does not in the least satisfy this expectation. We must turn elsewhere than to the Old or New Testament for death-bed scenes. Its warriors fight the good fight. We know that in some battle or other they finish their course. When or how, under what circumstances of humiliation or triumph, we are not told. Not by momentary flashes does God bid us judge of our fellow-creatures; for He who reads the heart, and sees the meaning and purpose of it, judges not by these.

F. D. MAURICE, *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, p. 53.

REFERENCES: v. 19.—F.W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 267. v. 23.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 40. v. 24.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 3rd series, p. 441; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 147; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 30; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 406. vi. 5.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 233. vi. 6, 7.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 281. vi. 14, 15.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, pp. 280, 300. vi. 15.—J. Ker, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 162; T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 132. vi. 20.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 217; Parker, vol. vii., p. 234. vi. 20, 21.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. ii., p. 127. vi. 20-22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 321. vi.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 117. vii. 1, 2.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ii., p. 41. vii. 2.—S. Martin, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 56. vii. 12-16.—J. G. Murphy, *Book of Daniel*, p. 32. vii. 18.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 454. vii. 18-20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1166. vii. 19.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 235. vii. 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 88; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 15. vii. 27.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1412; *Ibid.*, *My Sermon Notes*, Genesis to Proverbs, p. 67. vii.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 169. vii.-viii.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 128. viii. 6.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 105. viii. 15.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 340; W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 180. ix. 1.—W. Walters, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 248. ix. 7.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 326. ix. 8.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 148. ix. 13.—*Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 148. ix. 27.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 196. ix.—*Ibid.*, p. 169. ix.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 139. x. 10.—*Old Testament Outlines*, p. 62.

Chap. x., ver. 12.—"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good."

From these words I draw four useful and practical lessons.

I. I learn a lesson of mutual helpfulness. "As occasion demands," says Joab, "thou shalt help me and I will help thee." He was neither so vain as to think he could not possibly need a brother's help, nor so mean as to dream of standing aloof in a brother's difficulty. God intends that we shall be indebted to each other, and if Joab has to come to the help of Abishai, Abishai has no more reason to be ashamed than Joab.

II. I learn from the text a lesson of manly heroism. "Be of good courage and let us play the man." A hero is a man in the fullest sense of the word. There are heroes of the workshop, of the counter, of the office, of the market-place, on whose fortitude might be put quite as severe a strain as though they stood upon the battlefield, amid the glitter of cold steel or the rattle of musketry. If you are to play the part of the man, you must carefully cultivate the higher part of your nature. Lay the foundation of those intellectual and moral habits which will not only open up to you a vast range of elevating enjoyment, but will make you more capable of receiving the highest truth of all —the truth that concerns the kingdom of God.

III. I learn from the text a lesson of Christian patriotism. Great dangers put an edge upon true courage. "God and our country," was the cry of these two young men. It was a call to action and to danger, impelled by love to Israel and Israel's God. "Christian patriotism" was the term I used. You have no right to separate these words. The weal of our land is inseparably bound up with its religious condition. A true patriot will burn with desire to have his country leavened with real piety.

IV. I learn from the text a lesson of pious submission. "And the Lord do that which seemeth Him good." I do not venture to say that Joab was a saint, but on this occasion, certainly, his conduct and language were admirable, and worthy of imitation.

J. Thain Davidson, *Forewarned, Forearmed*, p. 78.

References: x. 12.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 235. x.—*Ibid.*, p. 146. xi. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 450, and vol. xv., No. 895. xi. 2.—*Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 17. xi. 13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 43.

Chap. xi., ver. 27.—"But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

SUCH is the solemn qualification which the Holy Scriptures append to a record of successful wickedness. The words afford a testimony to the perfect insight of God into our hearts and lives, and to His concern in them, His present observation of them, His judgment upon them, both present and future.

I. Every single thing that we say and do either pleases or displeases God. If it has no other value, it is made pleasing to Him by a pervading spirit of faith, by an habitual regard to Him, on the part of him who does it; or displeasing, whatever its apparent merit, by the absence of this spirit.

II. When it is said that "the thing which David had done displeased the Lord," it is quite plain that all the prayers and all the praises of that whole year went for nothing with Him to whom they were addressed. This is one part of the condition of him who has displeased the Lord. His prayers are unheard.

III. It is not only upon our intercourse with God that this deplorable condition acts so fatally; it puts our lives all wrong. It is impossible that anything can be in its place; it is impossible that any duty can be discharged healthily; it is only such as are superficial and mechanical that can be discharged at all.

IV. This state is not necessarily, nor perhaps commonly, a temporary state. It is the tendency of such a state to prolong, to perpetuate itself; it contains in itself a blinding, a searing, a deadening power; only a miracle of grace can ever terminate it.

V. God grant that as we have resembled His servant David in his fall, so we also may be like him in his rising again.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Harrow Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 454.

REFERENCES: xi. 27.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 356. xi.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 153.

Chap. xii., vers. 1-7.—"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David," etc.

THE chief devotional exercise which turns religion into a personal thing, which brings it home to men's business and bosoms, is self-examination. A man's religion cannot well be one of merely good impressions, the staple of it cannot well be an evaporating sentiment, if he have acquired the habit of honestly and candidly looking within.

I. Self-examination may be called an arraignment of ourselves at our own bar. It is an exercise most essential to our spiritual health, and the more earnestly to be pressed upon

Protestants, because there exists in the Reformed Churches no security but that of right principle for its ever being practised. The system of the confessional, with all its evils and abominations, may at least fairly lay claim to the advantage of exacting a certain amount of introspection with those who honestly conform to it.

II. The necessity for self-examination arises from the fact, so distinctly stated in Scripture, that "the heart is deceitful above all things," and that "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." While all characters are liable to this snare of self-deception, those are more particularly exposed to it who, like St. Peter and David, are persons of keen sensibilities, warm temperaments, quick affections. An acrid, soured character cannot flatter itself that it is right with half the facility of a warm and genial character. Self-love conspires with trust in our own hearts to make dupes of us as regards our spiritual account.

III. The first step in self-examination is to be fully aware of the deceitfulness of the heart, and to pray against it, watch against it, and use every possible method of counteracting it. The probe of self-examination must be applied to the better as well as to the worse parts of our conduct. And we must not forget that dissatisfaction with ourselves will avail us nothing, except as it leads us to a perfect, joyful, and loving satisfaction with our Saviour.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 68.

REFERENCES: xii. 1-7.—S. Goebel, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 10. xii. 1-14.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 160.

Chap. xii., ver. 4.—"And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him."

THE mixture of gold and clay of which our nature is composed is nowhere so strikingly displayed as in the constant tendency of men to conceive lofty purposes, and then to attain them by mean and sordid methods. The high impulse and the low self-indulgent method are both real, and this confused and contradictory humanity of ours is able to attain them both. We are always building steps of straw to climb to heights of gold.

There is real charity in the impulse of the rich man in Samuel, there is essential meanness in his act. He really wanted to help the poor traveller who came to him, but he wanted to help him with another man's property, to feed him on a neighbour's sheep. A great deal of our official charity comes very near the pattern of this ancient benefactor.

I. One of the truths about the advancing culture of a human nature is, that it is always deepening the idea of possession and making it more intimate. There are deepening degrees of ownership, and as each one of them becomes real to a man, the previous ownerships get a kind of unreality. With this deepening of the idea of property, the idea of charity must deepen also. No relief of need is satisfactory which stops short of at least the effort to inspire character, to make the poor man a sharer in what is at least the substance of the rich man's wealth. And at the bottom of this profounder conception of charity there must lie a deeper and more spiritual conception of property. The rich man's wealth, what is it? Not his money. It is something which came to him in the slow accumulation of his money. It is a character into which enter those qualities that make true and robust manliness in all the ages and throughout the world; independence, intelligence, and the love of struggle.

II. This makes charity a far more exacting thing than it could be without such an idea. It clothes it in self-sacrifice. It requires the entrance into it of a high motive.

III. The deeper conception of benefaction which will not rest satisfied with anything short of the imparting of character still does not do away with the inferior and more superficial ideas. It uses the lower forms of gift as means or types or pledges. The giving of money is ennobled by being made the type of a Diviner gift which lies beyond.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 336.

REFERENCE: *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 18.

Chap. xii., ver. 7—"And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man."

WE cannot be too thankful that it was not left to any partisan to interpret the remarkable character of David and to enforce the moral of his story. Considered as a biographer merely, the sacred historian neither extenuates nor sets aught down in malice. Moreover, he does not weigh the good acts of David against the evil, in order to show which quality predominates. For to him David, in his two characters, is not one man, but two. There is no concord between David fighting for God, in the confidence of God's righteousness, and David violating the plainest laws of society for his own selfish lusts. They are not to be reconciled.

I. It is just in this circumstance, that David's righteous and evil acts are not to be harmonised, that the wholesomeness of his written story lies. We do not feel the inconsistency

which unbelievers point to in David, with the sneering question, "Is this the man after God's own heart?" We feel rather that were it not for these inconsistencies David would be unlike us, and his story no pattern of ours.

II. David's method of attaining his treacherous object here seems to us clumsy when compared with some modern refinements of treachery; but the moving cause—gratification of self and disregard of all that stood in the way of it—this is the sin: the rest is merely an accident of time and locality.

III. How are we to account for David's strange conversion? People who pride themselves on being worldly-wise will tell you that a man's conscience does not trouble him until he is found out. They will tell you that repentance is easy when there is no escape. But this will never account for the real repentance of any man who has been brought from darkness into light. When a man's arguments for sin are swept away, and he sees it as it is, he may well be filled with horror and disgust. The horror is no subject for a careless sneer, but for awe and reverence.

A. AINGER, *Sermons Preached in the Temple Church*, p. 26.

I. NOTICE first the general character of David. It is full of variety, full of impulse, full of genius; it covers a great range of characters amongst ourselves; it is not like one class or character only, but like many. He is exactly that mixture of good and evil which is in ourselves, not all good or all evil, but a mixture of both, of a higher good and of a deeper evil, yet still both together.

II. Let us now see how from this union of glory and shame, of holiness and sin, we can draw the fitting lessons of David's repentance and our own. (1) Observe that the Scripture narrative does not exaggerate and does not extenuate. The wise and impartial history sets before us without fear or favour in all its brightness and in all its darkness, the life of David. His goodness is not denied because of his sin, nor is his sin because of his goodness. (2) The sin of David and his unconciousness of his own sin, and so also his repentance through the disclosure to him of his own sin, are exactly what are most likely to take place in characters like his, like ours, made up of mixed forms of good and of evil. His good deeds conceal his bad deeds, often even from others, more often still from himself. (3) Notice that Nathan in his parable called attention, not to the sensuality and cruelty of David's crime,

but simply to its intense and brutal selfishness. Notice also that even deeper than David's sense, when once aroused, of his injustice to man, was his sense of his guilt and shame before God. (4) The story teaches: (*a*) that no case is too late or too bad to return if only the heart can be truly roused to a sense of its own guilt and God's holiness; (*b*) that David's former goodness had this advantage: that, great as was his fall, there was for him a hope of restoration which in another there would not have been. A foundation of good in a character is never thrown away. If it is not able to resist the trial altogether, it will at least be best able to recover from it.

A. P. STANLEY, *Oxford Lent Sermons*, 1858, No. 2.

I. WHEN Alexander, king of Macedon, had his portrait taken, he sat with his face resting on his fingers, as though he were in a profound reverie, but really that he might hide from the observer's view an unsightly scar. Our Bible always keeps the sitter's fingers off the scars. It paints the full face with flawless detail —beauty and blotches, saintliness and scars.

II. After all, is it not a true human instinct and a healthy canon of art that puts the finger on the scars of the face? Is it fair and just to David himself to reduce the account of his numerous victories over adjacent foes to a few verses, and be so prodigal in sketching the one glaring wickedness of a career of splendid purpose, fine daring, and magnificent achievement? All that depends upon the spirit in which the biographer conceives and carries out his design, and mainly upon the purpose which dominates every part of his painting. (1) This story has set in the irrefutable logic of facts the truth that increasing and incredible mischiefs follow the violation of the laws of social purity in monarch as well as subject, in the children of genius and of goodness as well as in the offspring of sensualism and vice. (2) It has proclaimed that woman is not a satanic bait for man's soul, but a minister to his purity and happiness. (3) It has revealed the essential falseness of the polygamous basis of family life. (4) It is a pathetic and powerful enforcement of the law, discovered in the dawn of the world's life, that it is impossible to hush up a solitary lapse. (5) But the principal message of this chapter in the life of Israel's greatest hero is that David's great sin is met and mastered by God's greater grace.

III. It is not well for any of us to escape difficulty, combat, or criticism. We must not forget the perils of advancing years.

Age has its dangers not less than youth. The true soldier aims to be faithful unto death. If David falls after half a century's experience of God's mercy, who is safe?

IV. God enlarges a thorough repentance with His free and instant forgiveness, and crowns it with swift peace, soul-enlargement, and hallowed progress. "The Lord hath also put away thy sin."

V. But forgiveness is not all David seeks, nor is it all he obtains. The greater grace of God triumphs over the great sin of David in making it contributive to his spiritual enlargement, the clearing and expansion of his conceptions of sin, of responsibility, of the personality of God, and of holiness.

J. CLIFFORD, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 203.

REFERENCES: xii. 7.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 332; Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 144; J. G. Packer, *Twelve Sermons*, p. 112; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 15; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 293; C. Girdlestone, *A Course of Sermons for the Year*, p. 165; H. M. Butler, *Harrow Sermons*, 1st series, p. 85. xii. 7-13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 348.

Chap. xii., ver. 13.—"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord."

THE David of the Old Testament and the Peter of the New were alike keen, impetuous, high-wrought. Each falls in his strong point, because the strength of the good is necessarily the strength of the evil. But in both sin is the parenthesis; the thread of grace is gathered up again.

I. This was not David's only transgression. But it was the greatest, and perhaps if this had been resisted, the others would not have been committed, for sin strangely makes sin, as the mists of to-day fall in the rain of to-morrow. His great successes had brought him to that state of mind which is most open to the assaults of evil.

II. The strength of David's confession lay in the three words "against the Lord." Any one can say, "I have sinned," but you must have known God, you must have realised what sin is to God, and you must have felt something of what God is to you before you can say, "I have sinned against the Lord."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 112.

Chap. xii., ver. 13.—"The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

I. THE first thought which strikes us in connection with this text is the rapidity with which the penitent received his

answer, a rapidity so great that the pardon had actually preceded the confession, for the instant David's acknowledgment had passed his lips God's messenger said, "The Lord *hath* put away thy sin."

II. In these grand, simple words "put away," what immeasurable distances lie! Even the eye of Omnipotence cannot reach them. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 120.

I. Too little attention is commonly bestowed on the severity with which David was punished for his sins. He was punished as long as he lived, and as long as he lived he repented of those sins and humbled himself under the consciousness of them. When Nathan was sent to David, he spoke five distinct prophecies, not only "Thou shalt not die," but four others also, and these of a very different tenor; and all of them were alike fulfilled. To point out the fulfilment of these prophecies is simply to give a summary of the after-life of David. (1) First we read how the child Bathsheba had borne to David was smitten of the Lord and died. (2) The sword did not depart from his house through the whole remainder of his life. (3) This enemy was raised up to David from among the members of his own house and family. (4) As he had invaded the sanctuary of another man's home, his own hearth was no longer sacred. All this teaches us that "wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished." But, above all, it is a lesson that God is never more merciful than when He makes punishment follow upon sin.

II. Although David was severely punished, he was yet freely forgiven. The forgiveness of an offender may be granted in two ways: it may be without any conditions, or it may be granted quite as truly, quite as freely, and yet not so unconditionally. In the present case God had annexed a chastisement to His pardon and declared that it should fall upon David, and from that day forward every worldly visitation which recalled the memory of his sin brought with it a twofold blessing: it kept his conscience tender, that his fall might be his warning; and it renewed the pledge of the full and final forgiveness that had been promised to him.

R. SCOTT, *University Sermons*, p. 251.

REFERENCES: xii. 13.—R. Heber, *Parish Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 54; R. C. Trench, *Brief Thoughts and Meditations*, p. 120; J. Van Oosterzee,

Year of Salvation, vol. ii., p. 57; *Sermons for the Christian Seasons*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 705.

Chap. xii., vers. 13, 14.

I. When we read the history of David's fall, what surprises and perhaps somewhat perplexes us at the first is the apparent suddenness of it. There seems no preparation, no warning. But if we look back to the first verse of the chapter preceding, we shall find the explanation there: "At the time when kings go forth to battle . . . David tarried still at Jerusalem." Had he been enduring hardship with the armies of Israel, these temptations to luxury and uncleanness would probably never have come near him; certainly he would not have succumbed beneath them. The first lesson from the story is that prosperous times are perilous times.

II. Notice the way in which sins are linked to one another, in which, as by a terrible necessity, one leads on to a second, and a second to a third, and so on. The great enemy of souls is in nothing more skilful than in breaking down the bridges of retreat behind the sinner. Wrong may become worse wrong, but it never becomes right. Close walking with God is the only safe walking.

III. Do not miss this lesson—the ignoble servitude to men in which the sinner is very often through his sin entangled. Mark how David becomes the servant of Joab from the moment that he has made Joab the partaker of his evil counsels, the accomplice of his crime. Let no man in this sense be thy master. Let no man know that of thee which, if he chose to reveal it, would cast thee down from the fair esteem and reputation which thou enjoyest before men.

IV. Note the darkness of heart which sin brings over its servants. For well-nigh a whole year David has lain in his sin, and yet all the while his conscience is in a deathlike sleep, so that it needs a thunder-voice from heaven, the rebuke of a prophet, to rouse him from this lethargy.

V. In David's answer to Nathan we observe: (1) The blessing that goes along with a full, free, unreserved confession of sin, being, as this is, the sure token of a true repentance. (2) While he who has fully confessed is fully forgiven, there is still, as concerns this present life, a sad "howbeit" behind. God had taken from him the eternal penalty of his sin; but He had never said, Thy sin shall not be bitter to thee. God may forgive His children their sin, and yet He may make their sin most bitter to them here, teaching them in this way its evil,

which they might else have been in danger of forgetting, the aggravation which there is in the sins of a child, in sins against light, against knowledge, against love.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey*, p. 351.

I. FORGIVENESS does not mean impunity. God forgave David, yet bereaved him. Whatsoever men sow, that they reap, however bitterly they may repent having mingled tares with the wheat.

II. The meaning and mercy of punishment. (1) Punishment deepens both our sense of sin and our hatred of it. (2) Punishment deepens self-distrust and reliance upon God. (3) Punishment puts our repentance to the proof.

S. COX, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 29.

REFERENCES: xii. 13, 14.—S. Cox, *Expositions*, 1st series, p. 143; Bishop Harvey Goodwin, *Parish Sermons*, vol. v., p. 139; F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 373. xii. 14.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 236. xii. 15-23.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 210. xii. 20-23.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 355. xii. 22.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 236.

Chap. xii., ver. 23.—"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

THE doctrine of our future meeting and recognition is intimated in the earlier records of Scripture. We are told of Abraham, Jacob, Aaron, and Moses that each was gathered to his people. This cannot be merely a peculiar idiom of language signifying that they died. In some instances it is expressly said they died, and then it is added, "were gathered to their fathers." There would seem to be in the very heart of the expression a recognition that their fathers were still in existence in some state or other. As we advance to the New Testament we find that the twilight is broadening into the perfect day. This doctrine forms much of the very warp of the teaching of our Saviour and His Apostles.

I. It is taught, for example, that in eternity and in heaven we shall retain our personal identity. What life has not been able to do in the way of destroying our identity, death will not do. The sense of *I*, *me*, *myself*, will be with us as before.

II. We must also remember that the departed just are not diffused through the universe, but are gathered into one place. They are with the Lord, and they are there in a family

relation. It is only needful to appreciate fully this fact in order to see that mutual recognition is indispensable and inevitable.

III. We do not dream that the "spirits of the just made perfect," dwelling in our Father's house, will sit in silent reserve side by side, and as little do we dream that their speech will never be concerned with the way by which the Lord has led them. Unless the whole family in heaven is to be marked by features the very opposite of every earthly family, unless it is to be distinguished by isolation, reserve, and coldness, mutual recognition must be not only a possible thing, but an inevitable one, and we shall know as we are known.

E. MELLOR, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 125.

REFERENCES: xii. 23.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 205. xii. 24.—*Congregationalist*, vol. vii., p. 734. xiii.—E. White, *The Mystery of Growth*, p. 357.

Chap. xiv., ver. 14.—"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him."

I. GOD'S heaviest punishment is separation from Himself. There are degrees of separation—degrees in intensity and degrees in duration. There are two great divisions: the banished and the expelled. The banished wish to come back, the expelled do not; the banished have lost peace, the expelled have forfeited life.

II. Banishment is judicial, but it is not final. It is bitter, but it is curative. It is severe, but it is love. The banished must beware lest they go off further and further to remoter lands, lengthening and deepening their own punishment, till they get out of reach, beyond sound of recall and the circle of attraction, and then their banishment may become punishment.

III. God is always devising how His banished may be restored. His Son died that there might be a welcome to all the banished ones, and that expulsion might be a word unknown in heaven's vocabulary.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 97.

REFERENCES: xiv. 14.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 237; S. Cox, *Expositor's Notebook*, p. 9; M. Daniell, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2491; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 22; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 950. xiv. 25.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. viii., p. 176. xiv. 29-31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 563. xiv.-xviii.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 174. xv. 6. —*Ibid.*, p. 238. xv. 10.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 401. xv. 13.—T. Coster, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 395.

Chap. xv., vers. 19-21.—"Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king; for thou art a stranger, and also an exile," etc.

I. We have in this passage a remarkable instance of the spirit of true patriotism, all the more remarkable because, in one sense, patriotism is not quite the word to apply to Ittai, for he was a stranger and an alien, though a naturalised Israelite. In him we have a singular instance of that devotion to a person which will always be the leading characteristic of the Christian life. The legalist may be devoted to a system; the moralist may be devoted to an idea; the real Christian will be devoted to a *Person*, to the person of a living Christ.

II. Ittai was the kind of man that David wanted, and he is the kind of man that Christ wants now. There are many people ready enough to make the Lord Jesus Christ a kind of stepping-stone to help them into heaven. If they can make a convenience of Him and He can serve their purpose in a dying hour, it is all very well. It is not such as these the Lord wants. The "citizens of heaven" are men who are partakers of their Master's nobility.

III. It was the fact that David had received him as an exile that first bound Ittai's heart to him. We also are strangers and exiles. Christ gives us a home. Our adoption into His family should be a motive power which will bear us through all the shocks of the battle of life and make us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 1st series, p. 168.

Chap. xv., ver. 21.—"And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

Foremost among the little band who followed David from Jerusalem came six hundred men from Gath—Philistines from Goliath's city. These men, singularly enough, the king had chosen as his bodyguard; perhaps he was not altogether sure of the loyalty of his own subjects, and possibly felt safer with foreign mercenaries who could have no secret leanings to the deposed house of Saul. At all events, here they are, "faithful among the faithless," as foreign soldiers surrounding a king often are, notably the Swiss guard in the French Revolution. David's generous nature shrinks from dragging down Ittai with himself. Generosity breeds generosity, and the Philistine captain

breaks out into a burst of passionate devotion, garnished, in soldier fashion, with an unnecessary oath or two, but ringing very sincere and meaning a great deal. As for him and his men, they have chosen their side.

I. Look at the picture of this Philistine captain, as teaching us what grand, passionate self-sacrifice may be evolved out of the roughest natures. Ringing in his words we hear three things which are the seed of all nobility and splendour in human character: (1) a passionate personal attachment, (2) love issuing in willing sacrifice that recks not for a moment of personal consequences, and (3) a supreme, restful delight in the presence of him whom the heart loves. This capacity, which lies dormant in all of us, will make a man blessed and dignified as nothing else will. The joy of unselfish love is the purest joy that man can taste.

II. These possibilities of love and sacrifice point plainly to God in Christ as their true object. We are made with hearts that need to rest upon an absolute love, with understandings that need to grasp a pure, a perfect, and a personal truth.

III. Observe the terrible misdirection of these capacities in the sin and the misery of the world. There is nothing more tragic than the misdirection of man's capacity for love and sacrifice. We must lay ourselves on Christ's altar, and that altar will sanctify both the giver and the gift.

A. MACLAREN, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 145.

REFERENCES: xv. 21.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. iii., p. 420; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1512. xv. 23.—*Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 152. xv. 30.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 463. xvi. 10.—*Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 244. xvi. 12.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 239. xvi. 13.—*Ibid.*, p. 240. xvi. 15.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 238. xvi. 16.—R. Lee, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 491.

Chap. xvi., ver. 17.—"And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?"

I. THIS inquiry rebukes all merely exclamatory loyalty.

II. It rebukes all cheap loyalty.

III. It calls us sharply to practical loyalty.

PARKER, *Fountain*, April 21st, 1881.

REFERENCES: xvii. 1-3.—F. W. Krummacher, *David King of Israel*, p. 420. xvii. 2.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 240. xvii. 23.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 181. xvii. 27-29.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1544; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 108. xvii.-xix.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 183. xviii. 3.—*Ibid.*, p. 241. xviii. 14, 15.—R. Tuck,

Christian World Pulpit, vol. xvi., p. 4. xviii. 17.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 313. xviii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 31. xviii. 29.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1433; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 108. xviii. 31.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 434. xviii. 33.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 465; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 21. xix. 2.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 194. xix. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 808. xix. 14, 15.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 434. xix. 15.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 260.

Chap. xix., ver. 18.—"There went over a ferry-boat to carry over the king's household."

ACCORDING to old heathen mythology, there was a fabled river called Acheron, which the souls of the dead must cross. Its waters were muddy and bitter, and old Charon, who ferried them over, obliged each one to pay a sum of money for the passage. In this fable there is a remnant of sound belief in the existence of the soul, after it has left the body, in another state of being. The very river which the dead are represented as crossing has its counterpart in the language which Christians often use. Our notions of a ferry embrace convenient landing-places, boats for the conveyance of passengers, the payment of tolls, etc. It would not require much imagination to conjure up some of these in connection with the text.

There will come a moment in the life of each one of us when work, pleasure, folly, and wickedness will all be done with, and when we shall find ourselves on the shores of the river of death, with its dark, cold waters separating us from the better land. The golden city is on the other side, but the river must first be crossed. How are we to cross? The text will help us to understand. "There went over a ferry-boat to carry over the king's household." The ark of Christ's Church is only a safe "ferry-boat" because it is preserved and guided by our Divine Lord. As long as we remain in His holy keeping no harm can come to us.

J. N. NORTON, *The King's Ferry-boat, and Other Sermons for Children*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: xix. 31-37.—J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 100.

Chap. xix., vers. 31-40 (see also xvii., vers. 27-29; 1 Kings ii. 7; Jer. xli. 17; Ezra ii. 61).—"And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim," etc.

I. WE have here a man who knows that he is old, but who is not distressed by the thought of it. There are old men who do not know that they are old, or who seek to suppress their know-

ledge of it. Few things in the world are so pleasant as the sight of such a conscious, cheerful, hopeful old age as that of Barzillai, certain that it has not long to stay, but interested to the last in the best things of life, in the cause of God and man and country and Church. We must prepare for such an old age as this: (1) by taking God with us early in the journey of life; (2) by providing beforehand the compensations which God is willing to give for everything that may be taken away by the changes of life.

II. We have here a man who is rich, but who is satisfied with his natural position. It is at the stage of prosperity that the dissatisfaction of many men begins. If Barzillai had been of the mind of many, he would have made his wealth buy wings for his vanity, and, old as he was, would have tried to flutter in the sunshine of the court. But he was a wiser man, and a happier, and stands in higher honour this day than if he had wronged his nature and finished his life with an act of folly.

III. We have a man of long experience, who has kept up his love of simple pleasures. We can infer this from the tone in which he speaks. He had reached an age when the love of sensational things fails in all but the most frivolous, yet the way in which he speaks of them puts them quietly aside, as not to his taste and never likely to have been so.

It is not a dream that man can keep the love of natural things in his heart and can call them up in fancy as he reads. If a man will but read his Bible with a fresh heart, he may walk with patriarchs in the world when it was young and green, may rest with Abraham under the shade of the oak of Mamre, and see the upspringing of the well to which the princes of Israel sang. He may sit on the mountain-top with Christ, among the lilies and the birds, to understand what they say and sing, and he may listen till he hears far off the final hymn which shall be a concert of nature round regenerated man.

IV. We have a man who is attached to the past, but who does not distrust the future. For himself he has grown up in the old way, and cannot change, but he thinks, "The new has its rights, and the world will be on. My son is here; the future is beaming in his face and beating in his heart; I give him into hands I can trust for leading him in the way of truth, of righteousness." If the old can thus pass over into the new, there is security in all changes.

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 67.

REFERENCES: xix. 33.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon*

Sketches, p. 150. xix. 33-35.—F. W. Hook, *Parish Sermons*, p. 119 xix. 34.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 486; J. R. Macduff, *Good Words*, 1861, p. 523; Bishop Thorold, *Ibid.*, 1885, p. 67; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 237; *New Manual of Sunday-school Addresses*, p. 72. xix. 34, 35.—D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3456. xix. 35.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 416. xix. 41 with xx. 1.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 457. xix.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, pp. 238, 252. xx. 9.—J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 119. xx. 16-22.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 337. xx. 21, 22.—*Scotch Sermons*, p. 99. xx.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 252; Parker, vol. vii., p. 202. xxi. 1.—F. W. Krummacher, *David the King of Israel*, p. 457; Bishop Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 210. xxi. 1-14.—W. Hanna, *Christian Press*, Jan. 10th, 1878; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 82. xxi. 8-10.—W. H. Jellett, *The Elder Son, and Other Sermons*, p. 90. xxi. 9.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, 3rd series, p. 168.

Chap. xxi., ver. 10.—"And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, . . . and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

I. Consider first the Divine dealings with the house of Saul and the people of Israel.

The famine was because Saul and his bloody house had slain the Gibeonites. It was a consequence of that act of his. But the famine was not the punishment of Saul, the most guilty of the offenders. Saul was punished even in this world. In spite of his elevation to the throne and his brilliant successes, he lived a miserable life and died a miserable death. Here was his punishment, but so far as his crime to the Gibeonites was concerned he did not live to share in the misery occasioned by that sinful act.

The thought of this fact, that our actions, independently of their good or evil desert, have inevitable consequences, should make us very circumspect and careful. There exists a mysterious sequence of events which evades our research and reaches beyond the things of this world.

II. The conduct of Rizpah was natural; it was also not without its use, if we look to the moral instead of the physical world. She returned to her home with a softened though a saddened heart, with subdued affections, with a consciousness of having done what she could, and with the knowledge that her conduct had met with the approbation of David.

III. Notice the conduct of David. In his generous heart a generous action was sure to find a ready response. He whose parental affections not even the rebellion of an ungrateful son

could annihilate knew how to sympathise with the childless Rizpah, and Rizpah was doubtless consoled when, in a princely burial, she saw honour done to her husband's house.

Justice first, and then mercy. This is the way of the Lord, and David, as the Lord's vicegerent, walked in it.

F. W. HOOK, *Parish Sermons*, p. 66.

REFERENCES: xxi. 10.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 91; J. W. Burgon, *Ninety-one Short Sermons*, No. 66. xxi. 14.—*Sermons for Sundays: Festivals and Fasts*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 34. xxi. 15, 16.—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 89.

Chap. xxi., ver. 17.—"Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."

THE personal influence of King David was the spell by which Israel was reunited after long separations and out of great diversities of interests. A skilful general, a gallant soldier, a perfect bard, a saint of God, and, above all, a lifelong penitent after a great fall, this was the man whom his generals well called the "light of Israel;" this was he on whose life and name, they felt, depended the solidity of a yet fragmentary, a half-barbarised, nation. He was, as it were, the only lamp of God burning in a darkened sanctuary, the one pledge they had that strength, glory, and wisdom are not really of us, but of God.

I. David's personal influence was invaluable to the tribes; it was the most precious thing that God had given them as a nation. And therefore, valuable as it is on the field of battle, they will not use it there at all; they must keep it for the good of Israel in higher fields and for nobler achievements in the elevation of the people. This story teaches that the power of personal influence is the best gift which God gives to every one.

II. There is none too much light in Israel. If one man's name is not now, as in the old heroic savage times, a beacon blaze for all, so much the more careful should we be of all the rays of scattered light which here and there betoken that God's gifts are present.

III. But yet again we may rise higher. Let us not risk the light that is in our own souls. We all of us own some light of God burning in the dark places of our hearts. Bring not these sanctities into danger. Rekindle the light of Israel.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life: Sundays at Wellington College*, p. 55.

REFERENCES: xxi.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 207. xxii. 20.—J. Baldwin Brown, *The Higher Life*, p. 131. xxii.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, pp. 269, 284.

Chap. xxii., ver. 31.—"As for God, His way is perfect."

No. I.

THE way of God may mean: (1) the way which He prescribes, the simple, absolute way of holy duty into which He seeks to guide the soul; or (2) the way which He Himself pursues, the method of His dealings with His children, humanity, and the world.

I. Consider first our knowledge of the way of God. (1) There is a light in man—call it the practical reason, the conscience, the moral sense, or what you will—which, even in a fallen state, is capable of furnishing to man certain broad lines of duty which will be coincident mainly with the ways of God. (2) God sent His word to reinforce conscience and to inspire it to be a guide. (3) God is a Person; and in Christ, the express image of His person, we may talk to Him as a friend to a friend.

II. Notice the ways of man with which David had had opportunity to compare the perfect way of God. (1) The way of passion; (2) the way of pride; (3) the way of the world.

III. Notice the reason of the perfectness of God's way as the way of a soul. (1) It stands square with the possibilities, constitution, convictions, and needs of our being; (2) with the laws and orders of the great universe; (3) with the fact of eternity.

No. II.

I. THE way of God is perfect in that grand order of the universe which He has established and maintains.

II. In the order and progress which, as Lord of men, He secures in the human world; in the discipline and education of individual souls. The leading principles of His way are: (1) To establish a strong attraction; (2) to leave that principle to develop itself and have control of the whole nature and of the world by struggle; (3) to make it learn, by extreme severities of discipline if need be, patience, power, and knowledge of a fitness for Himself.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Perfect Way of God: Two Discourses.*

Chap. xxii., ver. 36.—"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

THESE words gather up into their brief utterance all the song of the great king David when he recounted his greatness, and

reveal at once the secret of his greatness and the heart of his song. David knew God as few human souls have done. He knew Him as the Creator and the Judge, but when he comes to consider his own life, it is to the gentleness of God he turns. All the lights and shadows and depths and heights of his manifold spiritual life had this for their source, and only this: the gentleness of God.

I. The gentleness of God is the secret spring of all the worth to which the great ones of God's kingdom have ever reached. Above and underneath all virtues are the dews and fountain-springs of the gentleness of God. From verge to verge, over all the sea of redeemed life, rises the thankful, joyous, self-abasing song, "Lamb of God, slain for us, Thy gentleness hath made us great."

II. It is not only the lives of saintly thinkers and workers in former centuries that illustrate this fact. It is borne out by the experience and testimony of God's people at the present day. Under all varieties of experience each arrives at the same conclusion: "By His grace we are what we are."

III. Of this gentleness which maketh great, Christ is the manifestation to us. The work Christ came to accomplish was the bestowal of gentleness upon a world which had lost the very elements of it. The light which shines from the Cross is the gentleness of God. He passed into the shadow of death, and there, with the gentleness of a Divine mother, laid His hand on the hand, His heart on the heart, of the very race which crucified Him, that He might overcome their enmity and bring them back to God.

IV. This is still the greatness of Christ as a Saviour and His power over the hearts of men. He is strong to save because He is long-suffering, and merciful, and generous. We are surprised when we read, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us," but it is the same wonder of mercy, the same manifestation of gentleness, that He still lives to save His enemies.

A. MACLEOD, *Days of Heaven upon Earth*, p. 184.

REFERENCES: xxii. 36.—A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 204; W. H. Jackson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 172; J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. ii., p. 433. xxii. 51.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 371. xxii.-xxiii.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 214.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 1.—"David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said."

In David we have: (1) an example and (2) a warning.

I. The characteristic of David was loyalty to the Lord his God, loyalty to the King of kings. Loyalty is love evinced towards a superior, love which induces us to do all that in us lies, as circumstances from time to time admit, in small things or in great, to promote the glory of Him whose servants and subjects we are, and to advance the interests of His kingdom. We are to show our loyalty: (1) by from time to time renewing our vow as subjects and soldiers of the great Captain of our salvation; (2) by seeking to enkindle in our souls, through prayer for the renovating influences of the Holy Ghost, love towards Him who first loved us; (3) by looking out for opportunities of service.

II. The history of David is also a warning. However excitable the devotional feelings may be, that man is not in a state of grace whose conduct is not conformable to the moral requirements of the Gospel. David fell; and if David had not repented, he would have perished everlastingly. Those whose hearts are fervent in adoration have need to take warning from David and watch as well as pray.

F. W. Hook, *Parish Sermons*, p. 90.

References: xxiii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 233; W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 312. xxiii. 1-5.—D. J. Vaughan, *The Days of the Son of Man*, p. 388; J. R. Macduff, *Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains*, p. 114.

Chap. xxiii., vers. 1-7.

If Jacob when he died foresaw the fate of a family, and Joseph the fate of a nation, David saw, and rejoiced to see, the destiny of mankind. His dying eyes were fixed on that great advent which changed the old world into the new world in which we live, on the dawn of that new Christian day which has come to the earth like the clear shining of the sun after rain and clothed it in fresh, tender green.

Whether it was so designed or not we cannot tell, but in the sacred record the last words of David fall brokenly from his lips, as though uttered with difficulty and pain. They sound like the murmurs of a dying man struggling for breath, who nevertheless has somewhat of the utmost moment to say, and nerves himself to gasp out the more weighty words and phrases, leaving

his hearers to piece them together and spell out their meaning. For convenience' sake we may divide them into a prelude and a revelation.

I. The prelude. The opening words point back to an antique prophecy, the prophecy of Balaam on the fate and glory of Israel (Num. xxiv. 3, 4). His oracle corresponds with Balaam's, but it also contrasts with it. David's vision is no cloudy and imperfect glimpse of a star and sceptre; he sees the King, the true King of men, and the new day which the King will make for men.

II. He sees in the future the ideal Ruler, the true Divine King who was to arise on the earth. In sweet, pure figures the kingdom of Christ passed before the mind of David. When the true King came, the darkness in which men sat would be over and gone; the rain of tears, falling because of the tyranny of man to man, would cease. His hope was based on the "everlasting covenant" which God had made with him. On His word, His promise, His covenant, the dying king bases his hope for his house and for the world.

Congregationalist, vol. i., p. 88.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 1-7.—S. Cox, *An Expositor's Notebook*, p. 115; J. G. Murphy, *The Book of Daniel*, p. 33. xxiii. 4.—J. Van Oosterzee, *Year of Salvation*, vol. i., p. 13.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 5.—"Although my house be not so with God."

THUS the thought of the shortcomings of family religion entered into the last words of David, the son of Jesse, and laid a shadow upon his dying peace. Of all the images under which another world has been revealed to us, the best and the happiest is by far "My Father's house." But in proportion as the anticipation of that Father's house is clear, and beautiful, and distinct, will the contrast of the earthly home grow every day more intolerable.

I. It is a very rare thing to find much freedom of intercourse on spiritual subjects among the members of the same family, so that many give the confidences of their souls to comparative strangers, who seldom, if ever, speak on deep matters of personal religion to their parents or brothers or sisters. The reason of this is threefold: (1) the general law which rules most minds that they honour more what is at a distance than what is near; (2) the consciousness that we all have that our near relations are acquainted with our infirmities and inconsis-

tencies—a consciousness which ties the tongue; (3) the want of effort, that effort without which no conversation is ever profitable, and without which no real benefit is ever given or received in any matter.

II. If the frequency of the custom had not almost accustomed our minds to it, we should all mark and be offended with the way in which many Christian fathers and mothers discharge their parental duties. The grace of reverence has fallen away from almost all our home duties. The man who is unreverential towards his parents can never have true reverence for God.

III. The chief reason of family evils is that there is so little prayer in our homes. We want the ark in the house, the Shechinah, to fill the rooms and make them all little sanctuaries.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 134 (see also *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 320).

REFERENCES: xxiii. 5.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 356; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. i., p. 37; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 409; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 19. xxiii. 11, 12.—S. Baring-Gould, *Village Preaching for a Year*, vol. ii., p. 204. xxiii. 13-17.—*Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 403. xxiii. 15.—M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 180.

Chap. xxiii., vers. 15-17.—"And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"

WE see in this instance how hard work, the sweat of toilsome labour, risk of life, weariness, wounds, and heroic endurance may all be accepted of God, may be poured out unto the Lord, though in the first instance shown to man. Every work done for others costing self-denial, weariness, and anxiety is like the water brought from the well of Bethlehem by the three valiant men of David. It does not rest with the immediate object; it is poured out in sacrifice to the Lord.

Unselfishness confers on him who is adorned with it a sort of priesthood. He is ever offering up sacrifices of his time, his comforts, his conveniences, to others, and though these be offered to others, they are in reality libations to God. There is special merit in such acts if they be done with a right intent and in such a way that Christ may be seen in all we do for others.

S. BARING-GOULD, *Village Preaching for a Year*, p. 194.

REFERENCES: xxiii. 15-17.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 126. xxiii. 20—S. Baring-Gould, *One Hundred Sermon Sketches*, p. 91. xxiv.—W. M. Taylor, *David King of Israel*, p. 269.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 1.—"And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."

We do not see immediately upon its being mentioned how it was wrong for David to number the people; that is, in the modern phrase, to take a census of the population. We have a census of the population taken at certain intervals, and this is not wrong, but very proper and useful. What is the difference between the circumstances of the children of Israel and our own?

I. Notice first the object with which this act was done. It was very clear what David had an eye to in numbering the people. It was one of those steps which the kings of the nations around were accustomed to take from time to time when they wanted to know how strong they were and what wars they could carry on, what countries they could invade and what cities they could take. This was the way of the heathen world, whom the Israelites were specially bidden not to imitate. They were not meant by God to be a conquering nation; they were a holy nation, a peculiar people, whom God had admitted into a special covenant with Himself. David's act was one of vulgar kingly ambition, in absolute contradiction to the express designs of God for the Jewish people. It pleased God by a terrible visitation at once to check this new temper and suppress at its very commencement this dangerous aim.

II. Another reason why David's act was a sinful one was that it was done under a very different dispensation from that under which we live. To the Jews God was not only their God in heaven, but their King on earth as well. Anything that interfered with this special Divine sovereignty was treason, because the chosen people were not to set up governments and modes of policy for themselves, as other nations did, but were to wait upon the voice of their Divine King. David was only king under a Divine King, and had no right to be constructing great plans out of his own head.

III. There is a sense, and a very true sense, in which David's sin applies to us. People are very fond of numbering the good things they have or suppose themselves to have. This is the peril to which our Lord refers when He says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" that is, you will be always brooding in your heart upon them, and they will fill your mind to the exclusion of all spiritual thoughts. The Bible takes us out of

ourselves, and directs us to God as the great object of our love, and in Him to our neighbour. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

J. B. MOZLEY, *Sermons Parochial and Occasional*, p. 72.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 1.—H. Thompson, *Concionalia: Outlines of Sermons for Parochial Use*, vol. i., p. 349; F. W. Krummacher, *David King of Israel*, p. 478; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 171.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 14.—"And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great and let me not fall into the hand of man."

CONSIDER: I. The different effects produced by the fear of God and the fear of man in the case of sorrow for sin in ourselves. (1) The fear of man leads directly to concealment, and to all those acts of meanness and falsehood which are practised to escape detection and punishment. (2) The fear of man drives some to feelings of general disgust and hatred towards mankind; others it drives to despair and to thoughts of suicide. (3) The fear of man leads us astray in our treatment of others who have offended.

II. Notice the effect produced by the fear of God. (1) The fear of God brings us to confession, and humiliation, and a grateful hope. (2) It leads us to judge rightly of the comparative guilt of different offences, and to value them, not according to the opinion of men, but according to the word of God. (3) It makes us eager and ready to forgive, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us.

III. It is remarkable, however, that while the Scripture enforces the most entire indifference to the censure of the world, and condemns so often and so justly the fear of man, yet it teaches us to shock no man's opinion of us arrogantly, and to consider *in all trifling matters*, as much as we can, how we may please others, not for our sake, but for theirs. The excellence of Christian compliance is that it regards the favour of man, not as an end, but as a means; it does not covet it for its own sake, but that men, by learning to look upon Christians favourably, may be persuaded to become altogether Christians themselves.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 164.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 14.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 66; J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 252; J. M. Neale *Sermons in Sackville College*, vol. ii., p. 85.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 17.—"And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and against my father's house."

CONSIDER: I. The sin committed by David. There is little doubt that it was manifestation of pride which made this action so offensive in the sight of the Lord. It is possible that David dwelt with pride upon the thought of his ample resources and numerous armies, and calculated that he was possessed of a power to repel aggression and attempt fresh conquests. He had forgotten that God alone, who had made him great, could preserve to him his greatness. The same offence may be committed in any rank of life. I care not what it is that a man is anxious to reckon up, but if it be pride that moves him to the reckoning, we identify his case with that of David, and charge on him the iniquity which exposed the Israelites to the pestilence.

II. The punishment which was incurred. There is something strange in the declared fact that sins are often visited on others than the perpetrators. But in the instance before us we can easily see that neither was David unpunished, nor the people punished without a cause. (1) David had sinned by a vainglorious desire to know the number of his subjects; the most suitable punishment was the destruction of thousands of those subjects, for this took away the source of exaltation. (2) It is evident, from the account in the book of Chronicles, that the people had moved the anger of the Lord before the king moved it by worldly confidence and pride. The people were really smitten for their own sins, though apparently for the sins of David.

III. The expiation which was made. The plague was not stayed by any virtue in the sacrifice which David offered. The sacrifice was but as a type, figuring that expiatory sacrifice by which the moral pestilence that had spread over the world would be finally arrested.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1894.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 17.—J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year: Sundays after Trinity*, Part I., p. 234; D. Hunter, *The Modern Scottish Pulpit*, p. 158.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 24.—"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

THE highest joy in the world is that which Christ feels in saving a sinner. Such as the cost is, such is the work; and such as the service is, such is the joy.

I. This is true of our private devotions. It is comparatively easy to pray morning and evening, but it is much more difficult to do so regularly in the course of the day. Yet the omitted and costly part is the very part which would show reality or give it.

II. The same is true of Bible-reading. There are two ways of reading God's word, so widely separate that the Bible is two books, according as we take the one method or the other. There is an easy, superficial way of reading down a chapter; and there is a bent, real, intense, intelligent searching into every word and every syllable. Mark the promise given to Adam, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread," and the promise applies to the natural and to the spiritual bread. Therefore the soul that will eat bread must do it with pains, perseverance, and patience.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 126 (see also *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 314)

WE observe in these words two things:—

I. The true motive to beneficence: "offering unto the Lord." Our offerings must be gifts to the Lord. Everything in life depends on the motive from which it springs. Man is what his motives are; he is no better and no worse. The highest and purest motive is that of doing all unto the Lord.

II. The true measure of beneficence: that which we feel to cost us something. Giving must always be tending towards sacrifice and self-denial. Having *love* as the impulse to our benevolence, its measure will be determined by the nature of the case which appeals for our help and also by the means which God has placed at our disposal.

E. MELLOR, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 31.

REFERENCES: xxiv. 25.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Sermons in Country Churches*, 3rd series, p. 280. xxiv.—Parker, vol. vii., p. 222.

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